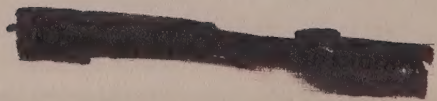


Mr. WILLIAM

SHAKESPEARES

COMEDIES, HISTORIES, & TRAGEDIES.

Published according to the True Originall Copies.

LONDON

Printed by Isaac Iaggard, and Ed. Blount. 1623.

Reduced facsimile of the
title page of the First Folio

ENGLISH LITERATURE

BY

JULIAN W. ABERNETHY, PH.D.

AUTHOR OF

"AMERICAN LITERATURE" AND "CORRECT PRONUNCIATION"

CHARLES E. MERRILL COMPANY

NEW YORK AND CHICAGO

Copyright, 1916, by
CHARLES E. MERRILL CO.

PREFACE

The purpose of this textbook is to serve as a guide through the vast field of English literature, pointing out those works that should be known and those that may be neglected. It is comprehensive, yet discriminating, aiming to give a true perspective of values. The great authors are treated with unusual liberality of space, but the minor authors, whose contributions are sometimes of vital interest and worth, are not dismissed with a mere catalogue mention of names. An effort has been made to give completeness and logical coherence to the story of English literature, traced from its remote beginnings to the present day; for it is the student's right, and should be his privilege, to know the whole story.

At least one full year is usually given, in courses of study, to the history of English literature. The suggested program of class work can be essentially accomplished within that time, if the daily work of the classroom is properly supplemented by outside reading. The student's reading in biography and criticism should be carefully guided by the instructor. The books named in the working programs will be found in public libraries, but the most important ones should be near at hand, as the necessary apparatus of the classroom. The topics for discussion and research are intended to serve, not merely as review questions on the matter of the textbook—such questions as the instructor would naturally frame for himself—but as a means of enlarging the text and developing habits of independent study and investigation. A topic should be assigned to each member of the class for special preparation, and of

many topics there should be an extended class discussion. It is hoped that the paragraph topics in the general narrative will prove helpful in formal recitation, as well as in holding the minds of students to a clear perception of essentials.

The prime object of a textbook of literature is to encourage and facilitate the study of the literature itself; to give hints and suggestions that will lure students to a love of great books and bring into their lives the delight, inspiration, and high enthusiasms that come from an intimate association with the choicest minds of the world.

"What is comprised under the word *literature* is itself the greatest power available in education," said Matthew Arnold. With such faith this book has been written, and in proportion as it succeeds in winning others to this faith, its highest purpose will be achieved.

CONTENTS

CHAP.		PAGE
I.	THE ANGLO-SAXON PERIOD, 449–1066 . . . . . Celtic Literature. Beowulf. School of Cædmon. School of Cynewulf. Anglo-Saxon Prose. Alfred. Ælfric.	1
II.	THE TRANSITION PERIOD, 1066–1360 . . . . . The Normans. Layamon's Brut. Ancren Riwle. Cursor Mundi. Cycles of Romances. Lyric Poetry. Union of Languages.	32
III.	THE AGE OF CHAUCER, 1360–1400 . . . . . Langland. Wyclif. Mandeville. Chaucer. Gower.	54
IV.	THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY . . . . . Chaucer's Successors. Ballads. Caxton. Morte d'Arthur. John Skelton.	83
V.	THE RENAISSANCE IN ENGLAND . . . . . The Oxford Reformers. Roger Ascham. The English Bible. Wyatt. Surrey.	98
VI.	THE ELIZABETHAN AGE, 1558–1603 . . . . . Elizabeth. Spenser. Sir Philip Sidney. Elizabethan Lyrics. Sonneteers. Historical Poets.	113
VII.	ELIZABETHAN PROSE . . . . . Euphuism. Romances. Translations. Hooker. Bacon. Characters. Ben Jonson.	136
VIII.	THE ELIZABETHAN DRAMA . . . . . Origin of the Drama. Miracle Plays. Moralities. Interludes. First Comedy. First Tragedy. Elizabethan Theater. Shakespeare's Predecessors. Marlowe.	154
IX.	WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, 1564–1616 . . . . . Youth. Education. Business Career. Order of the Plays. Comedies. Tragedies. Chronicle Plays. Roman Plays. Shakespeare's Genius. His Associates. Ben Jonson. Beaumont. Fletcher. Webster.	181

CHAP. PAGE

X. Cavaliers and Puritans, 1603–1660 217
Puritanism. Sir Thomas Browne. Fuller. Burton. Walton. John Donne. The Religious Poets. The Cavalier Poets. Herrick. John Bunyan.

XI. John Milton, 1608–1674 244
Education. Italian Journey. The Lyric Period. The Prose Period. Paradise Lost. Samson Agonistes.

XII. The Restoration, 1660–1700 262
French Influence. John Dryden. Decline of the Drama. Congreve. Artificial Comedy.

XIII. The Augustan Age, 1700–1744 280
General Characteristics. Swift. Addison. Steele. Defoe. Pope. Parnell. Prior. Gay.

XIV. The Age of Johnson, 1744–1784 313
The Novelists. Richardson. Fielding. Smollet. Sterne. Dr. Johnson. Goldsmith. The Historians. Burke.

XV. The Revival of Romanticism, 1726–1798 344
Reaction against Classicism. Ramsay. Thomson. Beattie. Percy's Reliques. Collins. Gray. Poems of Ossian. Chatterton. Cowper. Crabbe. Blake. Burns.

XVI. The Period of Revolution, 1798–1832 371
French Revolution. Wordsworth. Coleridge. Southey. The Romantic Novel. Jane Austen. Scott. The Romantic Essayists. Lamb. De Quincey.

XVII. The Post-Revolution Poets, 1812–1837 416
Byron. Shelley. Keats. Campbell. Moore. Landor.

XVIII. The Victorian Age, 1837–1901 445
Scientific Progress. Victorian Novelists. Dickens. Thackeray. George Eliot. The Brontë Sisters. Reade. Trollope. Meredith. Hardy. Stevenson. Kipling.

XIX. The Victorian Essayists 484
Macaulay. Carlyle. Ruskin. Pater. Newman. Arnold.

XX. Victorian Poetry 508
Arnold. Clough. Tennyson. Browning. Mrs. Browning. Rossetti. Morris. Swinburne.

XXI. The Twentieth Century 542
The Poets. Dramatic Revival. Celtic Renaissance. The Novelists.

Chronological Outlines of History and Literature 555
General Bibliography 567
Index 571

ENGLISH LITERATURE

CHAPTER I

THE ANGLO-SAXON PERIOD

449–1066

The sources of English literature have to be traced in a large field with uncertain boundaries. England was not the first home of the English people, and English literature was in the making some centuries before any land was known as England. A search for these obscure sources is interesting in itself, and necessary, if we would understand how various streams of influence have united in producing the national literature. Our literature, like our language, is a composite growth, representing the union of many foreign and diverse elements; and it is broader in its variety and richer in its qualities because of this composite character.

The earliest people with whom English literature in England is concerned were the Britons, whose name is still borne by the kingdom. These Britons were a part of the great Celtic race, now chiefly represented by the Welsh, the Irish, and the Highland Scotch. We know little of their early intellectual character, except that poetry was held in honor among them and was transmitted orally from generation to generation by the Druids, the priests

The Early Britons

of their religion. Gradually an extensive literature was produced among them, especially in Ireland. This literature assumed a written form in the seventh and eighth centuries; and the ancient Irish manuscripts still extant, it is estimated, would fill a thousand octavo volumes. The extent of the Celtic influence upon the national literature cannot be determined, for in the mingling of races during the formative period of the national life there was a natural blending and absorbing of race qualities. But a distinct Celtic element is traceable in our literature from the earliest times to the present.

Celtic Literature

The ancient Celts were a vivacious, quick-witted, sentimental, and imaginative people, with a pronounced gift of dramatic expression. They loved nature, especially its bright aspects, the colors of opening buds and the flowers of spring. The bards sang of the beauty of women with cheeks "like the foxglove," and invented such pretty fancies as a lady's bower roofed with the wings of birds, yellow and blue. Above all, they were prolific story-tellers and myth-makers, loving dearly to endow their heroes with extravagant virtues that could exist only in the realms of fancy. The collection of Welsh tales called the *Mabinogion* is a fair illustration of the Celtic charm.

There is little thought-substance in this literature, but a primitive, exuberant delight in the marvelous; it is a world of magic and miracle and wild passion that children love and their elders may enjoy without discredit to their intellects. And we must never forget that to these old Celtic story-tellers we owe the splendid inheritance of the Arthurian tales, the richest vein of poetic ore that runs through our literature. On the wild coast of Cornwall one may to-day see (with the eye of faith) the ruins of King Arthur's castle. Through all the centuries this noble Arthur has continued to reign, a mighty king in the realms of song and story.

In 55 B.C. Julius Cæsar entered Britain, and during the next century the land was conquered and added to the empire of

Rome. But the Roman occupation of about four hundred years, from the middle of the first to the middle of the fifth century, left hardly a trace upon literature and history. A few crumbling city walls, ruined baths, and broken pavements, and four or five words of military origin in the English speech are the principal relics of this transplanted Roman civilization. One service, however, of incalculable worth was performed by the Romans; they

The Romans in England

RUINS OF THE ABBEY CHURCH AT GLASTONBURY

brought Christianity to the island, and among the conquered and despised Britons it grew in a marvelous way.

As early as the second century, according to well-established traditions, there was a church at Glastonbury, "the first ground of God, the first ground of the Saints in Britain," as the old chronicler proudly asserts. Here was a center of Christian learning that extended its influence widely to the north and into Ireland, and was one of the chief instruments of civilization among both Celts and Saxons. Like almost no other spot in England, Glastonbury is hallowed by the double association of religious and poetic history and legend. Here the Holy Grail was concealed; here was the isle of Avilion whither Arthur made "long way" to be

Glastonbury

healed of his "grievous wound"; and here beneath the high altar of the great Abbey Church, as lovers of poetry believe, the king and his queen were laid in their last calm rest.

The Britons survived the Roman occupation, apparently with little loss of numbers and strength, and with large advancement in the arts of civilization; but they survived only to be again conquered, by Teutonic invaders. Englishmen have possessed three national homes. The first home was in the lowland regions of Denmark and Germany. From those storm-beaten coasts, dripping with sea-fogs, our Teutonic ancestors adventurously crossed the sea to find new homes, a new religion, and a new life in Britain; and again in somewhat the same spirit of home-seeking and adventure, these same folk, now become Englishmen, crossed the sea to found the third home in America. Thus the stream of English literature that has finally encircled the earth must be traced to its remote and obscure sources in the gloomy forests and fenlands of Denmark and the North German shore.

Three Homes of the English Race

Early in the fifth century the Roman troops were withdrawn from Britain to aid Rome against the attacks of the northern barbarians. Thus Britain, now unprotected, fell an easy prey to three strong tribes of these same northern barbarians, the Saxons, the Angles, and the Jutes. In the year 449 a band of Jutes landed on the island of Thanet, and there and then begins the history of the English people in England. Having once gained a foothold in this new land, these northern pirates swept over it with swift and savage destruction. The Roman citizens disappeared forever, and their beautiful villas made bonfires to celebrate the progress of the barbarians. The Britons were slaughtered in vast numbers, and the remnant of the race was driven westward into the Cornish peninsula and the mountainous regions of Wales and Scotland. Clearing away as completely as possible all traces of the former civilization,

Teutonic Conquest of Britain

the invaders settled down to the work of creating a new civilization of their own. From the life of wandering seafarers and pirates, they were rapidly converted to the life of land-owners and farmers.

A new epoch in the history of the race was opened. The Jutes settled in Kent. The Saxons settled in the south, where the shire names still indicate their presence—Sussex, the South Saxons; Essex, the East Saxons; and Wessex, the West Saxons. The Angles spread over a larger section, extending along the eastern coast as far north as the Firth of Forth. Hence gradually the whole land came to be known as Angle-land, the land of the Angles; but not until the days of King Alfred was the name "English" applied to the whole people. To the Britons the invaders were always Saxons, a general term for the fierce enemies from the sea; and to the Welsh an Englishman is still a "Saxon." In the study of literature and language the term "Anglo-Saxon" is used to indicate the two main elements that were united in the English race.

The Beginning of England

Of the literature that may have existed in the first English home on the Continent little is known, except from such fragments as were brought to England by the conquerors. These few stray specimens of primitive Teutonic poetry constitute the first group of poems to be studied, in the history of English literature. In substance and spirit they are foreign and pagan. They are interesting as literary beginnings, and more interesting as a revelation of the character of the people before it was modified by contact with Christian civilization. They are the poems of warriors whose gods are Woden and Thor and whose heaven is Valhalla, to which only brave men are admitted. But in these records of strange primeval emotions and fierce passions are found some of the fundamental characteristics of English life and literature.

Earliest English Literature

From the earliest time to which our knowledge reaches, these

people were lovers of music. The scop, who was both poet and singer, was held in high honor in the halls of every chieftain. His position was equal to that of the noblest thane.

Primitive Love of Song

To the accompaniment of the harp, he sang at the evening feasts the glorious deeds of his master and people. The word *scop*, like the word *poet*, means a maker, one who creates or composes his songs. There were also the gleemen, a humbler and more numerous class, who repeated the songs learned from others.

Nothing in Anglo-Saxon poetry is more prominent than this love of song and of the harp. The harp was the "wood of delight"; singing was the "awakening of glee"; and the ability to sing was the "gift of joy." No feast in the great hall was complete without the minstrel; when his harp sounded there was "joy of heroes." Sometimes the chief himself took the harp and sang, like Hrothgar in *Beowulf*, and sometimes even the retainers could add a lay when the harp was passed around, as is seen in the story of Cædmon. King Alfred loved the old songs of his people. The priests now and then used the harp and song to attract the people to their teaching. In thorp and hall the wandering minstrel trolled his songs of battle, tales of heroes, Bible stories, stories of saints, riddles, allegories, and moral proverbs. He was the nation's historian and teacher, and one of the chief instruments of the nation's progress from barbarism to civilization.

The Oldest Poem in Our Literature

It is an interesting coincidence that the oldest poem in English literature, and probably the oldest in any modern language, celebrates the poet's vocation. The poem is *Widsith*, the Far-wanderer, in which the scop describes his wanderings and the great folk and fine courts he has visited. Thus he begins:—

Widsiþ maþelode, wordhord onleac,
se þe monna mæst, mægþa ofer eorþan,
folca geondferde. Oft he on flette geþah
mynelicne maþþum.

Widsith spoke, his word-hoard unlocked;
he who of men the most, of nations over the earth,
of people had journeyed. Oft in the hall he received
a friendly gift.

And in a happy spirit of self-content the scop concludes:—

Thus wandering widely through the world
The gleemen make their way to many lands,
Tell their need and speak their thank-word;
Ever south or north some one they meet
Who, learned in lays, liberal of gifts,
Before his friends his fame would increase,
Of earlship prove worthy, until all shall pass away,
Light and life together. He who wins praise
Shall under heaven have steadfast fame.

But the fame of the scop was not always steadfast, as appears in a poem closely associated with *Widsith*, called *Deor's Lament*. Here the minstrel is lamenting his misfortunes, for some more popular singer has supplanted him in the hall of his lord. The poem is of unique interest for its form; it is written in stanzas, and each stanza ends with a refrain, a feature elsewhere unknown in Anglo-Saxon poetry. In both form and substance it is a true lyric, the oldest in the language. The forlorn singer consoles himself with the thought of others who have been celebrated for their misfortunes. Each stanza recites an instance and ends with the comforting reflection:—

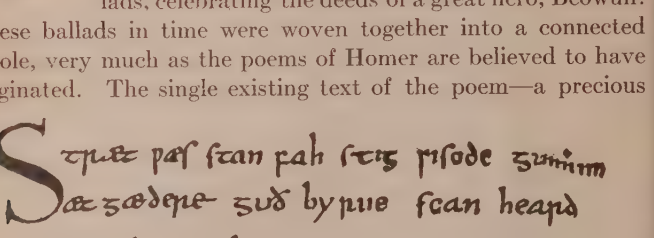
The Minstrel's Lament

That was endured, so may I this.

The greatest Anglo-Saxon poem is *Beowulf*, a splendid monument of the genius of our pagan ancestors, worthy to stand at the gateway of a noble national literature. It is a narrative poem of over three thousand lines, and is the oldest epic in any Teutonic language. The authorship, date, and place of composition are matters of speculation. Nothing in the poem indicates its origin in England; neither Angle nor Saxon is

mentioned; its characters and scenery are entirely continental; and yet it is a true English poem—that is, a faithful presentation of the characteristics of the ancestors of the race. The poem probably came to England in the sixth or seventh century in the form of popular ballads, celebrating the deeds of a great hero, Beowulf. These ballads in time were woven together into a connected whole, very much as the poems of Homer are believed to have originated. The single existing text of the poem—a precious

The Great Epic, Beowulf



A PORTION OF THE MANUSCRIPT OF BEOWULF

treasure now in the British Museum—belongs to the tenth century. It was written by some literary monk or Christianized scop who grafted into the poem Christian ideas that contrast oddly with the heathen action and sentiment.

Beowulf was a knight-errant born out of due time, and the story of his adventures runs thus:—

In the land of the Danes King Hrothgar has built a splendid mead-hall called Heorot, "most glorious of dwellings under the heavens," in which he entertains his thanes right royally with feasting and minstrelsy. But his happiness is short-lived. Grendel, a terrible monster dwelling in a neighboring fen by the sea, bursts into the hall at

night, seizes thirty thanes, and drags them to his sea-den to devour. This happens repeatedly for twelve years, and the king in deep sorrow abandons his beautiful hall. The story of this "dreadful distress, greatest of night-bales," is carried by the wandering minstrels to the land of the Geats in southern Sweden.

The Story of Beowulf

Beowulf, a nephew of King Hygelac and famous for his strength, determines to go to the assistance of King Hrothgar and "cleanse" Heorot. With fourteen faithful warriors he crosses the sea and finds a glad welcome at the court of the distressed king. The evening is spent in a great feast, with speech-making and song. "A bench was prepared in the hall for the Geat-men all together where the strong-hearted hastened to sit, proud in their might. A thane did well his duty, bore in his hand a gold-adorned cup, poured the clear mead. Now and again sang the minstrel with clear voice in Heorot." The "high-born queen, gold-adorned" and "mindful of courtesy," with her own hand offers the mead-cup to Beowulf, who in proud wise speaks:—

> This was my purpose, when I set forth on the sea,
> Boarded the sea-boat with my warrior band,
> That forthwith the will of your people
> I would work, or in the battle fall,
> Fast in the fiend's grip. I will perform
> Deeds worthy of a man, or my last day
> In this mead-hall will meet.

In the night when all are asleep, save the watchful chieftain, from the 'misty slopes of the moor" Grendel comes stalking, in his eyes a 'loathsome light likest to flame." The monster bursts in the iron-banded door, and as he looks upon the sleeping warriors he laughs in his heart. Quickly he seizes a warrior, rends him in pieces and devours him. Then Beowulf lays his mighty hand-grip upon Grendel and there is a terrible contest and great confusion in the hall. The thanes draw their swords in vain, for the monster's hide cannot be pierced by steel; the mead-benches are overturned, the hall "cracked aloud," and 'wonder it was that the fair folk-hall did not fall to ground." At last Beowulf wrenches off an arm and shoulder of the monster and he flees to his fen-home to die. Then "to Beowulf was battle-fame given." In the morning there is great thanksgiving and gift-giving, games, horse-races, and songs in praise of the wondrous victory.

The Fight with Grendel

But the next night, when Beowulf is absent, Grendel's mother, a 'mighty mere-woman," comes to the hall, seizes Hrothgar's dearest thane, and drags him to her sea-cavern. To the sorrowing Hrothgar Beowulf speaks a hero's consolation. "Sorrow not, wise man. Better it is to avenge a friend than to mourn him much. Let him who may win honor, and accept death when it comes; that is best for

a warrior. I promise thee Grendel's kin shall not escape, either in earth's bosom or in ocean's depths. Patience with thy woes I expect from thee." They track the "sea-wolf" through the forest-paths to a deep sea-gorge where a whirlpool flings its black and poisonous waters into the sky.

The Fight with Grendel's Mother

Beowulf plunges into the pool and engages in deadly struggle with the "mighty water-wife" in her ocean hall. His trusted sword, Hrunting, proves to be useless; but just at the point of death he finds a magic blade, with which he strikes off the monster's head. And a strange light from the "blade's beam shone," just as "from heaven brightly doth shine the firmament's candle." Near by he discovers the dead body of Grendel and severs his head, and then a wonder happens; in the hot and poisonous blood the sword blade melts entirely away, "as an icicle melts when the frost fetters are unloosed."

All day long his faithful thanes have waited, heart-sick with gazing on the blood-stained waters, thinking never to see their dear lord again. At length Beowulf appears, and in triumph they carry the head of Grendel to the gold-hall and present to the king this token of victory. Thus ends the "death-plague of the Danes." Again there is rejoicing in Heorot, and presenting of rich gifts to the Geats, with fine speeches of praise and farewell. As the "sea farers" depart, the white-haired king with flowing tears kisses Beowulf; "so dear was the man that his breast-flood he could not restrain."

The Triumphant Hero

In the action of the poem there is now a break of about sixty years. Beowulf has become King of the Geats and for fifty years has ruled them in peace and happiness. But a sore distress, which only he can remove, has fallen upon his people. In a high stone barrow a treasure hoard has been guarded for three hundred years by a fire-breathing dragon. Because a lawless thane has stolen a golden cup from the hoard, the dragon is ravaging the land. To save his people, Beowulf seeks the monstrous "worm" in its lair, and in killing it receives his death-wound. The treasures are brought forth from the cave. "To win these things for my people," he says, "I have paid my old life." The sorrowing thanes build a funeral pyre upon which his body is burned, and on a high bluff they raise a great mound, to be forever known as Beowulf's Barrow to the "sea farers as they drive their barks from afar through the mists of the ocean." And so the story ends with praises of the great hero:—

Beowulf's Last Adventure

> Thus mourned the men of the Geats
> The fall of their lord, the hearth-companion,
> Said that he was of earthly kings,
> Of men the mildest and most gracious,
> To his people the kindest, and most eager for praise.

The substance of this ancient epic is a mingling of history, folk-lore, and myth, and to determine the exact limits of each is impossible. There was a real King Hygelac, and most probably a real hero Beowulf. The battles with the monsters are variously interpreted. They may be the stories of famous fights with wild beasts; or they may represent the conflict of man with the forces of nature; or they may even be a part of the nature myth of the conflict between night and day, light and darkness, summer and winter. But this kind of interpretation may easily be pushed too far. A primitive people, like children, love a good story and are not troubled by things too strange to be believed.

Interpretation of the Poem

The chief interest of the poem is in its pictures of old Teutonic life, the customs of the people, the relations between the king and his thanes, their love of adventure and fighting, their delight in the mead cup and the gleeman's song. More than this, the poem is an expression of the ideals of a heroic age. Beowulf is the ideal hero and king, strong, brave, chivalrous, generous, and devoted to his people. A lofty morality pervades the poem; Beowulf was a man who "never swore a false oath." Women are respected. Bravery is a virtue; fear of death is a disgrace. Warriors are true to their chiefs. "Death is better for every earl than a life of dishonor," says Wiglaf to the cowardly earls who deserted Beowulf in his fight with the dragon.

Heroic ideals

Peculiarly attractive are the vivid descriptions of wild nature and the life of the sea. The detailed picture of the mere-woman's pool, overhung with "rime-covered thickets" and "shadowed by a fast-rooted wood," is justly celebrated as the earliest piece of nature poetry in our literature. The poem, like all early Anglo-Saxon poetry, is saturated with sea-mists. The poet wells upon every aspect of the ocean with loving fidelity and never tires of inventing new epithets to describe it. It is the whale-road," the "swan-road," the "sea-path," and the

Earliest Nature Poetry

ship is the "wave-farer" and the "wave-steed." A fine picture of these old sea-rovers in their high-prowed skiffs is contained in a single line:—

The foamy-necked boat glides like a bird.

But the bright aspects of sea life are not so prominent as its terrors and gloom. We hear the melancholy moaning of the waves, the angry lashings of the storm, premonitions of sudden death. Weird, the Teutonic embodiment of fate or destiny, casts a shadow over every action, giving to it a stern aspect. Beowulf, in his last fight, cries: "To us it shall be as our weird betides, that weird that is every man's lord." Nature gave to the voice of the scop a tone of sadness. Hamlet, the melancholy Dane, is a descendant of these rude philosophers, viewing with primitive perplexity the mysteries of life and death.

Teutonic Melancholy

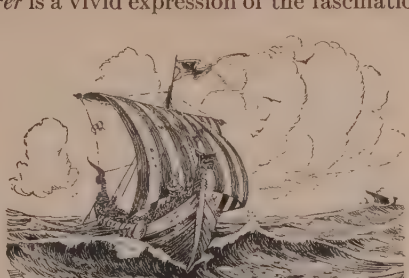
Although the imaginative power of Beowulf is not great, its descriptions are full of truth and vigor, the narrative is spirited, the touch of pathetic tenderness at the close is finely conceived, and throughout a heroic spirit gives dignity to the poem. "The poem is great in its own way," says Stopford Brooke, "and the way is an English way. The men, the women, at home and in war, are one in character with us. It is our Genesis, the book of our origins."

Anglo-Saxon genius generally expressed itself in epic form, but it has also given us several short poems possessing lyrical quality. These crude lyrics are of the elegiac type, expressing the melancholy that seems to have been absorbed into the blood of the Teuton from the cold fogs of the North Sea. *The Wanderer* describes the sorrows of one who has lost his lord and in "heaviness of heart" wanders far over the frost-bound waves, searching "sorrow-smitten" for the comfort of some new "giver of rings." When "sleep and sorrow sit together" upon him, he dreams of the happy days with his master, but he awakes to find only the

Anglo-Saxon Lyrics

desolate sea clouded with falling sleet and snow. Then "the wounds of the heart are made still sorer. Ever new is pain!"

The Seafarer is a vivid expression of the fascination of the sea,



THE SAXON'S "WAVE-STEED"

which, from the remote and nameless author of this poem down to Tennyson and Swinburne, has been one of the most inspiring themes used by English poets. In spite of many hardships, the old seafarer is drawn by an irresistible impulse to the wild life of the rolling waves. Like Tennyson's "Ulysses," he is driven by the desire in his heart to wander, "to seek the home of the stranger in lands afar off." Not the rich gifts of his lord, nor the harp in the mead-hall, nor the wife of his home, nor anything whatsoever can give him delight, "save the tossing of the waves,"—

The Seafarer

> O forever he has longing, who is lured by the sea.

In *The Ruin* there is an expression of regret for the vanished splendor of some Roman city in Britain, most likely Bath. In a spirit of gentle sadness the poet contemplates the crumbling walls, where once was "the joyous revelry of men," the gathering of proud warriors "all gloriously adorned," now "departed hence, undone by death, held fast

The Ruin

in earth's embrace." This is a far-away fore-note to Gray's *Elegy*.

A surprising modernness is found in *The Wife's Lament* and *The Love Letter*. The clear personal note in these two little lyrics sets them quite apart from the general tone of Anglo-Saxon poetry; they mark the beginning of English love poetry. In the first the forlorn wife, abandoned by her husband, homeless and friendless, pours forth her vain yearnings for the love of other days, which now "is as it had never been." With a climax of despair, she closes her lament: "Alas, what woe is hers, who waits with hopeless longing for her beloved." In *The Love Letter* the wooden tablet upon which the message is carved is personified as the speaker, who bids the betrothed come over the sea to her lover:—

Earliest Love Poems

> As soon as ever thou shalt hear, on the edges of the cliff,
> The cuckoo in the copswood, chanting his sorrow.

Two celebrated fragments of poetry, belonging to the early heroic period, must be briefly mentioned: *Waldhere* and *The Fight at Finnsburg*. *Waldhere* is a part of a lost poem connected with an early German cycle of epics out of which grew the *Nibelungenlied*, the great foundation epic of German literature. This two-page fragment, therefore, is interesting as a connecting link between our Anglo-Saxon ancestors and our German kinsfolk.

War-Songs

The Fight at Finnsburg, which is the theme of one of the gleemen's songs in *Beowulf*, is a ringing war-song, describing the fierce clash of battle. While Hnæf and his warriors are asleep, the hall is attacked by the enemy with fire and sword. The chief shouts to his men in warning and exhortation:—

> "This is not the day-dawn in the east, nor the flight of a dragon, nor are the hall-gables afire, but the birds of battle sing and deeds of woe are at hand. Awake ye, my men of war, take your shields in

hand, be in the front of the fight, be brave." Then there was a terrible din of mortal conflict, a "flash of swords as if all Finnsburg were afire"; and the greedy raven hovered over the slain, "swart and dark-gleaming."

The form of this old poetry seems strange and uncouth. We do not recognize our own English in the language, nor any rhythmic beauty in the verse; yet elements of this early language and versification are still thoroughly alive in our literature. Anglo-Saxon is an inflected speech, like Latin, or more nearly like modern German, with which it is closely allied by race kinship. It has an elaborate system of verbal endings to denote case, tense, gender, number, and person. The change from Anglo-Saxon to the English of to-day has been a continuous process of decay in formal grammar and loss in vocabulary, with compensating gains in vocabulary from outside sources.

Language

The verse structure is simple and monotonous, possessing little music, but much crude strength and effectiveness when properly interpreted by the voice. The short, rugged verses fall like sword-strokes in battle. The lines are of varying length and are unrhymed. The meter depends upon accent and alliteration. Each line is divided into two parts by a rhythmic pause. In each part there are, regularly, two accented syllables; two of these syllables in the first part and one in the second begin with a vowel or are alliterated, that is, begin with the same consonant. Often there is only one alliterative letter in each part. Another prominent feature of this poetry is repetition of thought and expression, apparently for emphasis—a characteristic common in all primitive verse. A few lines from *Beowulf* will illustrate the meter:—

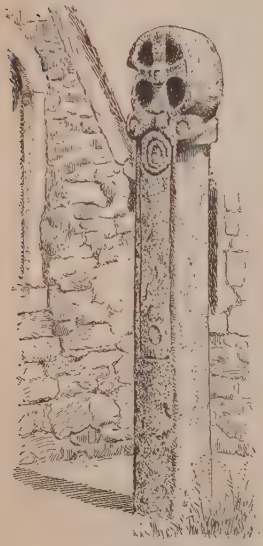
Versification

Đa wæs on healle heard-ecg togen,
sweord ofer setlum, sidrand manig
hafen handa fæst; helm ne gemunde,
byrnan side, ðe hine se broga angeat.

Then was in *h*all the *h*ard-edged drawn,
the *s*word over the *s*eats, many a broad *s*hield
*h*eaved in *h*and fast; *h*elmet minded not,
the *b*yrnie *b*road, when him the *b*ale seized.

In 597 the little band of Roman missionaries under St. Augustine began to preach Christianity at Canterbury. Already the Celtic church at Glastonbury had been long established. Under the influence of these two centers, practically all of Anglo-Saxon Britain was Christianized within a century. It was a good field for the new faith. A people whose spirit was clouded with melancholy were ready to respond to a new doctrine of spiritual hope and comfort. Paganism did not disappear at once, but the belief in the old gods gradually yielded to the new Christian ideals. Indeed, we still have the Teutonic deities with us in the names of the days of the week, and our Christmas and Eastertide were originally heathen festivals.

Conversion of Saxon England to Christianity



AN OLD CELTIC CROSS

The subjects of poetry were now taken from the Scriptures and stories of the saints, but the poet remained about the same in spirit, retaining the relish for fighting and reluctant to give up the glories of war for the virtues of peace. Often the change is little more than a change of names. Bible heroes become chieftains, whose praises are sounded in the mead-hall. Christ is "the joy of Æthelings, the victory-son of God"; the apostles are "twelve warriors famous under the stars, thanes of the Lord"; Abraham is "a bold earl" attended by "hearth-

retainers." The Teutonic mythology is transformed to Christian purposes. Weird becomes Providence, giants and elves are powers of evil, Valhalla is Paradise, and Niflheim is Hell. Cold was more terrible to these northerners than heat, so the two are combined by Cædmon in his hell, a place filled with "fire forever new, and frost bitter cold, forever fire or biting frost." Naturally, as the habit of religious meditation increased, poetry became less heroic and more lyrical. The mind of the pagan Saxon was absorbed by the outward world of adventure; the Christian Saxon turned his mind to the inner world of spirit, and found a new interest in contemplating the mysterious life of the soul.

Mixture of Christianity and Paganism

The School of Cædmon

The principal Anglo-Saxon Christian poems are grouped under the names of two poets, Cædmon and Cynewulf. Many poems formerly attributed to these poets are now known to have been written by others, whose names have perished. It is best, therefore, to divide the unknown authors of the poems we possess into two schools, the school of Cædmon in the seventh century and the school of Cynewulf in the eighth century.

Cædmon

Cædmon is the first poet whom we know to have lived and written in England; therefore he is often called the father of English poetry. Moreover, the poems associated with his name contain the first expression in English poetry of the ideals of Christianity. Of the personality of Cædmon little is known. He held some menial position in the monastery of Whitby, and died in 680.

Cædmon's Dream

The story of Cædmon's gift of song is given by Bæda, or Bede, the father of English history, in his monumental Latin work, the *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*. At an evening feast, when the harp went

round and each one was expected to contribute a song, Cædmon left the hall for shame because he knew no song, and went to the stables where he had the care of the horses. There he fell asleep and had a strange dream:—

> In the dream, one appeared who said, "Cædmon, sing me something." Then he answered, "I cannot sing anything, and therefore I came out from the feast." Again he who spoke said, "Yet, you must sing." Then said Cædmon, "What shall I sing?" He said, "Sing to me the beginning of all things." Then Cædmon began at once to sing in praise of God the Creator, verses and words which he had never heard, and when he arose from sleep he held firmly in memory all that he sang while asleep.

The marvel was made known to the Abbess Hild, who tested Cædmon's divine gift, gave him teachers, and admitted him to the brotherhood of the monastery. And "all that he could learn by listening," says Bede, "he pondered in his heart, and, ruminating like some clean beast, he turned it into the sweetest of songs. His song and his music were so delightful to hear that even his teachers wrote down the words from his lips and learned them."

The touch of the miraculous in this account of the birth of English poetry need not disturb our faith in its essential correctness. Genius is always a miracle; moreover, people in all ages, when influenced by strong religious feeling, readily accept the marvelous as an evidence of the mysterious hand of God. Bede is too careful a historian to be seriously doubted, and as he lived near to Cædmon in both time and place, the circumstances which he so minutely records must have been generally accepted as facts.

A version of the hymn which Cædmon sang in his dream has been preserved in his native Northumbrian dialect. As it is believed to be the oldest poem written in England, and possibly also the only relic we possess of the poetry actually composed by Cædmon, it is worth transcribing as a literary curiosity of peculiar interest:—

Cædmon's Hymn

Nu scylun hergan hefaenricaes uard,
metudæs maecti end his modgidanc,
uerc uuldurfadur, sue he uundra gihuaes,
eci dryctin, or astelidæ.
he aerist scop aelda barnum
heben til hrofe, haleg scepen:
tha middungeard moncynnæs uard,
eci dryctin, æfter tiadæ
firum foldu, frea allmectig.

Now should we praise the Guardian of heaven's kingdom,
The might of the Maker and his mind-thought,
Work of the Glorious-father; since he of all wonders,
Eternal Lord, the beginning created.
He first shaped, for the sons of earth,
Heaven for a roof, the holy Creator;
Then the middle earth, the Guardian of mankind,
Eternal Lord, after created
A dwelling for men, the Lord Almighty.

Three poems, *Genesis*, *Exodus*, and *Daniel*, are attributed to Cædmon. These with others of a similar character upon scriptural subjects are collectively known as Cædmon's *Paraphrase*. His best work is the *Genesis*, a free rendering of the first book of the Bible as far as Abraham's sacrifice. The famous passage describing the fallen angels, hell, and the revengeful Satan contains much imaginative power and skill of dramatic expression. The idea of a lost paradise is well conceived and the character of Satan is drawn with force and clearness. There can be little doubt that Milton was familiar with this poem when he wrote *Paradise Lost*, and the striking similarities of thought and phrase form an interesting bond between the earliest and the greatest religious poet. The spirit and manner of the old poet will be seen in the following passages:—

Cædmon's Paraphrase

The All-ruler had races of angels,
Through hand-might, the holy Lord;
Ten he created whom he trusted well,
That to him they their fealty would fulfil,
Would work by his will; hence wisdom he gave them,

Whom he shaped with his hands, the holy Lord.
He made them most happy; one made he most strong,
Most mighty in his mind-thought, whom much he let rule,
Next highest to himself in the heavenly kingdom.
So beautiful he made him, he was like the bright stars.
. . . . . .
Dear was he to our Lord, but it could not be hidden
That his Angel began to be proud,
Lifted himself against his Leader, sought hate-speech,
Words of boasting against him, and would not serve God.
He said that his body was beautiful and bright,
Was white and handsome; in his heart he could find
No wish to serve God, to work his Lord's will.
He thought that himself had might and more craft
Than the holy God had, more companions of war;
Thought how by his own craft he would build for himself
A throne stronger and higher in heaven.
. . . . . .
Then was the Mighty one angry,
The highest Ruler of heaven, and hurled him from the throne;
Hate and forlorn favor he had won from his Lord.
Angry against him was the Good one in his heart,
Therefore he must go to the depths of hard hell;
Because he raised war against the Ruler of heaven,
He cast him from his favor and hurled him into hell,
Into the deep cavern, where he was changed to a devil,
A fiend, with all his companions.
Then fell they from heaven through three nights and days,
The angels from heaven into hell, where the Lord
Made them demons, since they worshiped not his word or his deed.

Cædmon may not be the author of this poem or of the other poems associated with his name, but this does not much matter, for we know upon the word of Bede that he wrote poems upon these subjects, and that "many others in England imitated him in the composition of religious songs." These followers were inspired by his poetic and religious enthusiasm, and in the poems that have been preserved, whether in part or wholly written by his pupils, we are surely in close touch with the spirit and style of Cædmon himself.

A characteristic of his school is the absence of self-consciousness. The poet's manner is epic rather than lyric; he reveals

nothing of his personality, and only a vague outline of his character. In place of the wandering scop of old, singing in the mead-halls, we have a humble monk whose greatest joy is to exalt the heroes of Bible history in popular song. Yet occasionally we are reminded of the untamed spirit of the pagan scop. The best passages in these poems are those wrought with the old heroic love of the wilderness, raging waters, and the furious battle-clash. The destruction of the Egyptians in the Red Sea is described with special relish in the *Exodus*. The love of war is still in the heart of the poet, but the battles of which he now sings are between God and the hosts of sin.

Character of Cædmon's Poetry

The mingling of pagan and Christian elements is well illustrated in *Judith*, one of the finest of the Cædmonian poems, "a good ringing piece of English verse," as Brooke calls it. Only a fragment of the original poem remains—about one-fourth—but it is enough to show the author to be a poet of genuine power in narration and description. It is the story of Judith and Holofernes, taken from the Apocrypha of the Old Testament.

Judith

There is a great drinking-feast in the camp of the Assyrians, and Holofernes, like some Saxon chief at a drinking-bout, is "full of fierce mirth and mad with mead." Judith is brought to the tent of the prince, strikes off his head while he is in drunken sleep, and carries the bloody token back to the "bright walls of fair Bethulia." There she arouses the Hebrew hosts with a remarkable speech of blood-thirsty eloquence. They attack the leaderless Assyrians, slaughter them with true savage glee, and leave their bodies to "the will of the wolves, fodder for the fowls of slaughter." Then there is a grand triumphal return with the spoils of battle, and to Judith is presented the "huge byrnie of Holofernes with red gold embossed and his armlets and bright gems," and for all this she gives "praise to the Lord of every folk."

The School of Cynewulf

Little of solid fact is known of Cynewulf, hardly more than is known of Cædmon, but his name is attached to four poems: *Christ*,

Juliana, *The Fates of the Apostles*, and *Elene*. In these poems there is a distinct expression of individual feeling and thought, such as is nowhere found in the Cædmonian poems. It is fairly well established that this poet was a Northumbrian, who lived and wrote in the latter part of the eighth century; a man of learning well acquainted with Latin literature, and undoubtedly at some time the scop of a great chief. He was probably converted to the Christian faith late in life, and then chose, for his poems, subjects from the Gospels and the legendary lore of the church. He possessed a broad experience of life, a deeply religious spirit, a tender sympathy, and a love of nature, especially of the sea.

Cynewulf

Of the four poems bearing the name of Cynewulf, *Christ* and *Elene* are of the most literary value. The first is a noble expression of early Christianity. Its threefold theme is the Nativity, the Ascension, and the Day of Judgment. The material was drawn from the Gospel of St. Matthew and from Latin sermons and hymns, but the treatment is that of an original creative poet. There is much variety in the poem, fine narrative and descriptive passages, vivid pictures and dramatic scenes, and lyrical outbursts of religious fervor and exaltation of spirit.

Christ

Elene is the story of the search for the true cross by Helena, mother of the Emperor Constantine. In this poem, in addition to the force and freedom of the old epics, there is a deliberate refinement of style. With the keen zest of a scop, the poet describes the pageantry of war, the glittering armor and fluttering banners, and the furious crash of shields in the onset of battle. But he does not lose sight of his religious motive, and the last canto he devotes to reflections upon life and immortality.

Elene

Other poems attributed, with varying degrees of probability, to Cynewulf are *Guthlac*, an account of the life and death of an English anchorite; *Andreas*, the story of St. Andrew's marvelous adventures in rescuing his comrade, St. Matthew, from

the cannibals; a large collection of *Riddles*, an ingenious form of composition popular among mediæval scholars; and *The Dream of the Rood*, "the choicest blossom of old English Christian poetry." This last poem is noteworthy as the earliest of the dream poems so common at a later period.

Poems attributed to Cynewulf

A unique poem is *The Phœnix*, which is attributed with strong reason to Cynewulf. Unlike all other Anglo-Saxon poems, the atmosphere and scenery here show the influence of Latin literature. Instead of describing the stern aspects of the north, the author of *The Phœnix* pictures a land of tropical beauty, filled with sunshine, bright color, balmy airs, and gently flowing streams. The poet is in love with his theme and dwells upon each detail with a grace and tenderness that give to the poem a surprising charm. The story of the fabled bird that rises from his own ashes is used to allegorize the death and resurrection of Christ. A passage from the description of the land of the Phœnix will illustrate the poet's mode of fervid repetition:—

The Phœnix

Beautiful is this land and blessed with all pleasures,
With finest flowers and perfumes of the field.
Noble the Worker who wrought this world,
High-minded and happy in his might,
Where often to the righteous are revealed
The joy of songs and the gate of the heavenly realm.
Nor rain nor snow falls there, nor hoar-frost nor hail;
Nor heat of the sun, nor continuous cold,
Nor warmth of summer, nor winter storm
Does harm; but beautiful and happy is the land.
The hills are not high as here with us,
Nor do stone-cliffs stand steep;
It is not rough with ridges, with hillocks and hollows,
But the fields flourish beautifully, blooming with joys.
Serene this place-of-glory, where sunny groves glisten,
Where forests are pleasing and fruits never wither,
Where blossoms are ever bright and trees ever green,
As God first ordained them to be.
Summer and winter the woods are hung with bloom,
The leaves never fade, nor by fire shall be harmed,
Forever and ever, until earth has its end,

The history of Anglo-Saxon poetry ends with two fine war poems, *The Battle of Brunanburh* and *The Battle of Maldon*, both celebrating historic events. The first is a song of triumph for the victory won by Æthelstan, grandson of Alfred, in 937, over the allied Danes and Scots. Its lines vibrate with fierce patriotism and ring with the exultant shouts of the English. Tennyson was moved to translate the poem, with marvelous truth to the spirit and form of the original. The second song, often called *Byrhtnoth's Death*, describes the defeat of the English in a desperate fight with the Danes, in the year 991. Byrhtnoth, ealdorman of Essex, is a noble leader of the ideal heroic type, who despises death in his devotion to the obligations of friendship and patriotism. The battle goes against him, and he dies with words of cheer for his comrades and a prayer to the "Lord of Angels" that his soul may "fare in peace." The poem is written with intense vividness and force, reviving the old heroic style of *Beowulf*. It is the last lay of Anglo-Saxon heroic minstrelsy.

Last Saxon Poems

Anglo-Saxon Prose

To King Alfred, whom we now call the "Great," and whom earlier ages were wont to call "England's Darling," English literature owes a peculiar allegiance. In his long struggle with the Danes he not only saved the English people and laid the foundation of a united English nation, but he also saved the English language. Had the Danes won, our language and literature would doubtless have been Scandinavian, with possibly some addition of Latin culture. During the period when the Danes overran the land, Alfred's little kingdom of Wessex became a harbor of refuge for Anglo-Saxon culture.

Alfred, 849–901

Before the Danes came, Northumbria was the home of learning and literature. The monasteries were the homes of the poets, and there books had been gathered from all parts of the

world and lovingly copied by the monks. Cædmon was a lay brother in the great monastery of Hild at Whitby; at Jarrow lived and died the scholar Bede, who had mastered the entire learning of his time; and Cynewulf was certainly a member of some one of the Northumbrian brotherhoods. All of the Anglo-Saxon poetry we have been discussing, it is fairly certain, was first written in the Anglian dialect of Northumbria, but it has all come down to us in the West-Saxon dialect of Wessex. Fortunately the slight difference in language between the north and south could not materially affect the poetry. How much literature was destroyed by the invading Danes, when the poets and scholars fled from their ruined cloisters, can never be known; but for the copying and preserving of what we have we are largely indebted to Alfred and those inspired by his spirit and example.

Literature in Northumbria

Literature before Alfred was entirely poetry; from Alfred to the Conquest it was essentially prose, and of this new English prose Alfred himself was the founder. As soon as he had made peace with the Danes, with the wisdom of a true statesman and with a yearning for the good of his people, he began the upbuilding of his kingdom through education. In the general devastation, literature had suffered sorely. Latin, the sole language of the church and of literature, was no longer intelligible even to the clergy. "There are only a few on this side the Humber," says Alfred sadly, "who can understand the divine service or even explain a Latin epistle in English." The best remedy for this state of ignorance was plainly to be found in translating some of the more important works into the native speech, and this task the king himself performed. As he had little creative power, his direct contribution to literature was small, but he had a passion for knowledge and for spreading it throughout his kingdom; so with the earnest spirit of a reformer he made books for the education of his people. In this work we find the beginning of the earliest prose literature in any modern tongue.

Alfred's Work for Education

Four books were chosen for translation: Pope Gregory's *Pastoral Care*, a book of wholesome instruction for the clergy; Bede's *Ecclesiastical History*, a book already thoroughly English in all except language; the *Universal History* of Orosius, a popular book containing about all the knowledge of history and geography possessed by the Middle Ages; and *The Consolations of Philosophy* of Boethius, a late Roman writer whose meditations were always lofty and pure. Alfred's purpose and method are explained in the opening lines of the Preface to the *Pastoral Care:*

Alfred's Translations

> When I reflected how the teaching of the Latin language had recently decayed throughout this English race, and yet many could read English writing, then I began, among other various and manifold businesses of this kingdom, to turn into English the book that is called *Pastoralis* in Latin, and *Hierde Boc* [Shepherd's Book] in English, sometimes word for word, sometimes sense for sense, just as I learned it from Plegmund my archbishop, and Asser my bishop, and Grimbold my mass-priest, and John my mass-priest. After I had learned it so that I understood it and could interpret it with fullest meaning, I translated it into English.

Evidently Alfred was governed in his literary labor by the rule of utility and common sense. He expanded or condensed the words of the original, sometimes paraphrasing a passage and sometimes omitting a passage altogether. Often, also, he paused to comment on an important statement, and to point a moral. These personal passages clearly exhibit the character of the man—his zeal for the instruction of his readers, his childlike simplicity and sincerity. To the pagan reflections of Boethius he gave a Christian coloring by liberal interpretation and adaptation. Thus this royal schoolmaster taught his people, furnishing them with knowledge, ideals, and inspiration.

Character of Alfred's Work

But the chief interest of Alfred's work, for the student of literature, centers in the brief prefaces to his translations, written in a simple, lucid style and expressing the spirit of his personality. The preface to the *Pastoral Care*, in which an

account is given of the lamentable state of learning in England, is regarded as the earliest piece of literary prose that has come down to us. It is the corner-stone of a vast structure, happily begun by the hand of the first great, typical, ideal Englishman.

The only other important name in this period is that of Ælfric, whose *Homilies* mark the highest development of Anglo-Saxon prose. Ælfric was a priest of Winchester, and wrote in the last part of the tenth century. The *Homilies* are sermons and moralized narratives, for the instruction of the common people, based on material drawn from the early writers of the church and from legendary sources. There is much quaint and curious matter in them to attract the modern reader. It is interesting, for example, to follow the learned priest through his embarrassing difficulties when attempting to explain church doctrine to the illiterate Saxon, whose language was vastly inferior to the Latin in words expressing abstract ideas. Often good, too, are the anecdotes and stories, such as that of Pope Gregory's pun—"Not Angles but Angels, if they were Christians"—which he made on seeing the Angles in the slave market of Rome, an incident which led finally to the Christianizing of England.

Ælfric's Homilies

Ælfric wrote three series of these popular discourses, containing more than one hundred and fifty homilies in all. In the last series, he introduced alliteration and rhythm into his prose, producing a kind of prose poetry, which strangely anticipated by nine centuries the experiments of De Quincey in "impassioned prose." Possibly this rhythmic prose was adopted with the practical idea of meeting the tastes of the common people, who would be more easily attracted to knowledge by the jingle of verse. Ælfric wrote with the feeling of an artist, and these rhythmic homilies stand conspicuous as the last artistic expression of Anglo-Saxon genius.

Earliest Poetic Prose

One important work in Anglo-Saxon remains to be mentioned, the Saxon *Chronicle*, the oldest and most valuable historical

work possessed by any modern nation in its native tongue. From an early period it was a custom in the monasteries to jot down important events, year by year, on a board containing the calendar of church days. These crude beginnings of history, confined at first to local and church matters, were gradually expanded into a complete history of the realm. Seven copies of these annals, or the *Chronicle*, as they are collectively called, are still in existence to bear testimony to the patriotic industry of the monks of Winchester, Worcester, Peterborough, and other religious houses. It is probable that Alfred directed this annual record and even wrote some portions. The section devoted to his reign is written with the most care and fullness of detail, not only making excellent history, but also containing some of the finest specimens of Anglo-Saxon prose. Occasionally a monk with imagination would enliven the dry facts of war and church affairs with a poem, such as *The Battle of Brunanburh*.

The Saxon Chronicle

Brief extracts will illustrate the manner of making this famous history:—

A.D. 802. This year on the 13th before the Kalends of January the moon was eclipsed at dawn; and Boernmod was ordained bishop of Rochester.

A.D. 832. This year the heathen men ravaged Sheppey.

A.D. 865. This year the heathen army sat down in Thanet, and made peace with the men of Kent, and the men of Kent promised them money for the peace; and during the peace and the promise of money the army stole away by night, and ravaged all Kent to the eastward.

The entry for 1085 contains an account of the making of King William's *Domesday Book*, which ends thus:—

So very narrowly did he cause the survey to be made, that there was not a single hide nor a rood of land, nor—it is shameful to relate that which we thought no shame to do—was there an ox, or a cow, or a pig passed by, and that was not set down in the accounts.

The earliest contemporary entries in the *Chronicle* were made at about the year 755; ambition for a complete national history

led the chroniclers to extend the record back to Cæsar's conquest in 55 B.C., using facts and fictions borrowed from Bede and Orosius. The last entry in the *Chronicle* is for the year 1154, nearly a century after the Norman Conquest, and with this entry the voice of Anglo-Saxon England becomes silent.

Anglo-Saxon literature represents the primitive and heroic period in the development of the English race. There is a rude dignity about it that commands respect and awakens literary interest, but it is lacking in breadth, refinement, and art. It is wild and strange, alive with primeval passion, like rock-ribbed mountains with no verdure to soften their outlines. It is "grand, monotonous, and melancholy," says M. Jusserand. The poetry is always concrete and vigorous in expression, and the tone is intensely serious. It is lacking in variety of both theme and treatment, being composed for a simple-minded folk who loved best to hear the stories of their favorite heroes endlessly repeated. The most obvious characteristic of Anglo-Saxon poetry is this monotonous repetition of theme and sentiment. Even the introduction of Christianity did not materially affect the general tendency of literature; its tone remained somber, gloomy, and austere. Long before the shock of the Norman Conquest occurred, the creative impulses of the Saxons were exhausted. Poetry was dead, and in spite of the efforts of Alfred and the literary ambition of the preacher Ælfric, only the bare foundations of a prose literature had been produced.

General Characteristics

The time had come when the national genius needed enrichment from outside sources. This need, we can now see, was supplied by the invasion of the Normans in 1066, an event that produced a chaos of peoples and languages in England. But out of this chaos, in the space of about three hundred years, a new nation, a new language, and a new literature were evolved.

PROGRAM OF WORK

CLASS READING. TRANSLATIONS: *Widsith* (Cook and Tinker,[1] Gummere, Morley, vol. II); *The Seafarer* (C. and T., Pancoast and Spaeth, Morley, II, Brooke, 480); *The Wanderer* (C. and T., P. and S., Brooke, 364–367); *Deor's Lament* (C. and T., Gummere); *The Ruined City* (C. and T., Brooke, 107–109); *A Love Letter* (C. and T.).

BEOWULF: Translations in prose by Child, Earle, Tinker, J. R. C. Hall; in verse by Morris and Wyatt, Gummere, Garnett, Lumsden, J. L. Hall. The entire poem should be read, if possible; otherwise these selections: The Fight with Grendel, ll. 710–836 (Morley I, 286–290, C. and T., P. and S.); Grendel's Mere, ll. 1357–1379 (Brooke, 42–44); Beowulf's Funeral Pyre, ll. 3100–3184 (C. and T., Brooke, 57–58, Morley I, 310). A prose translation is given in Century Readings. *The Fight at Finnsburg* (Gummere, Brooke, 64–65).

SCHOOL OF CEDMON: *Fall of the Angels* (C. and T., Brooke, 304–308, Morley II, 84–90); Selections from *Exodus* (C. and T., P. and S.).

SCHOOL OF CYNEWULF: *Phœnix*, *Judith* (selections in Bronson); *Dream of the Rood* (Brooke, 440–442, C. and T., Garnett, P. and S.); *Riddles: The Storm Spirit, The Swan, The Boar, The Falcon* (C. and T.).

PROSE: Alfred's Prefaces to *Pastoral Care* and *Boethius* (C. and T.); The *Chronicle: 1066, Battle of Hastings; 1087, Character of King William* (C. and T.); Record for *1137*, in original text (Manley). Ælfric: *New-Year's Day, The Easter Homily, The Invention of the Holy Cross* (C. and T.).

LITERARY HISTORY. Brooke's *History of Early English Literature;* Earle's *Anglo-Saxon Literature;* Cambridge History of English Literature; Ten Brink's *Early English Literature;* Morley's *English Writers*, vols. I and II; Jusserand's *Literary History of the English People;* Taine's *History of English Literature;* Snell's *Age of Alfred;* Cook's *Asser's Life of King Alfred;* Lewis's *Beginnings of English Literature;* Pauli's *Life of Alfred*, with translation of Alfred's *Orosius* (Bohn's *Antiquarian Library*); Brother Azarias's *Development of Old English Thought.*

TRANSLATIONS. *Beowulf*, as given above; Kennedy's *Poems of Cynewulf;* Garnett's *Elene, Judith, Battle of Brunanburh, Battle of Maldon, Dream of the Rood;* Whitman's *Christ of Cynewulf; Christ, The Phœnix, The Wanderer*, in *The Exeter Book*, translated by Gollancz (Early English Text Society); Cook's *Judith;* Cook

[1] For full titles, see General Bibliography.

and Tinker's *Select Translations;* Pancoast and Spaeth's *Early English Poems.* Bede's *History* and the *Chronicle* in Bohn's *Antiquarian Library.*

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND. Green's *Short History of the English People,* ch. I, or *The Making of England* and *The Conquest of England;* Gardiner's *Student's History of England;* Cheyney's *Short History of England;* Traill's *Social England,* vol. I; Freeman's *Old English History;* Rhys's *Celtic Britain.*

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION AND RESEARCH

1. Characteristics of the Ancient Celts. 2. Relate a story from the *Mabinogion* (Lanier's *Boy's Mabinogion,* or Everyman's Library). 3. Discuss Matthew Arnold's theory that English poetry gets from the Celts its "natural magic" (*Celtic Literature,* ch. vi). 4. Evidences in our language of the Roman occupation of Britain (Lounsbury, Emerson).

5. The three homes of the English race (see Freeman's *English People in its Three Homes*). 6. Locate on the map the original home of the English. 7. Character of the Teutons at the time of the conquest of Britain (Green's *Making of England,* Int. 16–20; ch. iv, 154–169; Taine, bk. I, ch. i. 8. Love of music among the Saxons. 9. Describe the life of the scop as given in *Widsith* and *Deor's Lament.*

10. Give the story of *Beowulf.* 11. Collect passages in this and other poems illustrating the love of sea-adventure. 12. Study the Saxon use of vivid metaphors. 13. Compare the Saxon idea of Weird with the Greek and Roman idea of the Fates or Parcæ (see Brooke, 24, 206). 14. Why is the epic the natural poetic form used by primitive peoples? 15. Compare Longfellow's *Hiawatha* for characteristics of primitive poetry.

16. Effect of Christianity upon the war spirit of the Saxons (Taine, vol. I, ch. i, sec. vi, Brooke, 194–200). 17. Read Bede's account of Cædmon, bk. IV, ch. xxiv (C. and T.). 18. Compare Cædmon's poem with *Paradise Lost,* v, 657–672; I. 34–74, 242–270, 740–746. 19. The little prose poem of the "sparrow" in Bede, bk. II, ch. xiii (C. and T.). 20. King Alfred's relation to the growth of literature.

CHAPTER II

THE TRANSITION PERIOD

1066–1360

By a single battle England was transformed. The shock of the Conquest caused a paralysis of the national life, from which, however, the nation recovered with greatly increased powers of growth, with vital functions strengthened. Saxon civilization was arrested in its progress but not destroyed. Traditions were broken down, customs and habits of life were changed, language was reconstructed, and even the blood of the people, which had thus far been almost purely Teutonic, now became strongly colored by the finer blood of the south. It is interesting to imagine what England would be to-day had the country developed its national life independently, like Germany. There can be no doubt that, so far as literature is concerned, we ought never to regret the disaster that happened to the English people at Hastings in 1066.

The Battle of Hastings

These Normans, or Northmen, who came to England with William the Conqueror, were a remarkable people. Originally, as their name indicates, they were dwellers in the north of Europe, the neighbors and kinsfolk of the Angles and Saxons in their first home. In the tenth century, led by the lure of adventure and plunder, they invaded France, secured the northern part of the kingdom as a permanent home, adopted the language of the French, and learned their arts and customs. In the space of about one

The Normans in France

hundred years, these Northern barbarians produced the most vigorous and enlightened civilization in Europe. This new civilization, a combination of the enterprise of the North and the culture derived from Rome, was now brought to England. Again there was a process of race absorption and readjustment, and the struggle was prolonged and bitter; but in the end the Norman baron became an English lord.

The Normans possessed qualities that were in strong contrast with the dominant traits of the English. They had a special genius for government and skill in political and military organization. Their first contribution to English civilization, therefore, was a strong centralized government, in place of the divided authority of rival chiefs. Thus the work of consolidation begun by Alfred was completed and a true sense of nationality was created. They had an energetic religious faith and a love of the fine arts, and this love of God and love of the beautiful found expression in the splendid cathedrals and monastic halls that sprang up rapidly in all parts of England. They were an imaginative, idealistic people, strongly creative in their instincts. Among them chivalry had its origin and main growth. Their language and literature represented the inherited refinement of the ancient world. Hitherto England had been isolated, standing outside the great currents of European culture, but with the advent of the Normans she came to a new and broader knowledge of "the glory that was Greece and the grandeur that was Rome." Above all, these Normans possessed an alert, flexible, and joyous temperament, quite unknown to the serious-minded Saxon, which brought to English literary expression a permanent element of inestimable value.

Characteristics of the Normans

In brief, then, we may say that the Normans contributed to English progress a new government, a more effective religious life, a knowledge of European scholarship and culture, the ideals of chivalry, and a large linguistic and literary enrichment.

The period of about three hundred years from the Conquest to Chaucer is a period of transition. At first all was confusion, a jangle of discordant elements that had to be brought into concord. Three languages were in use: French, the language of the nobility and the court; Latin, the language of scholars and the monasteries; and English in its various dialects, the speech of the great mass of the people. Though the English were conquered, they were not subdued, as is shown by the determined manner in which they clung to their native speech. The language survived the conflict of three centuries and emerged from its obscurity and degradation with a complete triumph over its foreign rival. It now lost its inflections, its grammatical gender, and much of its vocabulary. But it gained from the French a more flexible form and structure, and an enlargement of its vocabulary by the addition of nearly three words for every one of its own.

Confusion of Languages

Out of this fusion of the two languages has come the finest instrument of literary expression known to the modern world. At times the French seemed likely to extinguish the English speech, for the Englishman, having become reconciled to a foreign master, naturally began to imitate his manners and to acquire his language. French became the language of fashion and high life. Robert of Gloucester, a chronicler of the time, mournfully complains: "I ween that in all the world there is no country that holds not to her own speech, save England alone." But the patriotic chronicler was over-anxious. At no time was the language wholly submerged by the destructive forces of the period. King Alfred called his people and language "Englisc," and from Alfred's time to the present the language of England has been a continuous English language, passing through many changes and phases of development, but never losing its original and fundamental English character. No impassable chasm was opened by the Conquest, as some

A Continuous English Language

writers would have us believe, between the language of Cynewulf and of Chaucer. Cædmon and Milton saw the same heavenly visions and described them in essentially the same language, even though each would have been unable to read the other's poems in the original.

THE MAKING OF ANCIENT BOOKS

During the first one hundred and fifty years after the Conquest little was produced that is of interest to the student of literature. The times were too troublous for art. The Saxon *Chronicle* was patriotically continued at Peterborough to the year 1154; the *Homilies* of Ælfric were transcribed and imitated, that the common people might still have their religious instruction; and the memory of good King Alfred was kept green by a collection of *Proverbs*, attributed to his hand. But the glory of the native literature had disappeared forever, and the new-comers were yet content with the literature they had brought from the continent.

One form of writing, however, was energetically cultivated during this barren period. In the monasteries were scholars of large attainments, many of whom had come from abroad. As if foreseeing the great future of the nation that was now in the making about them, these scholars, foreign and native alike, vied with one another in writing the history of their country.

The Early Chroniclers

They wrote in Latin, and generally in the chronicle form. The "Venerable Bede" served them for both model and material. The value of this chronicle literature is in the fullness of details concerning contemporary affairs. One of these chroniclers, William of Mal-

mesbury, deserves an honorable place among English historians, even though he made the unfortunate mistake of writing in Latin. His *History of the Kings of England* gives evidence not only of scholarly industry and judgment, but also of imagination, taste, and literary aspiration. Passages like the following, from his account of the first crusade, sustain their dignity, even in translation, in comparison with the brilliant descriptions of Gibbon or Macaulay:—

> This ardent love not only inspired the continental provinces, but even all who had heard the name of Christ, whether in the most distant islands or savage countries. The Welshman left his hunting, the Scot his fellowship with vermin, the Dane his drinking-party, the Norwegian his raw fish. Lands were deserted of their husbandmen; houses of their inhabitants; even whole cities migrated. There was no regard to relationship; affection to their country was held in little esteem; God alone was placed before their eyes. Whatever was stored in granaries, or hoarded in chambers, to answer the hopes of the avaricious husbandmen or the covetousness of the miser, all, all was deserted; they hungered and thirsted after Jerusalem alone.[1]

Geoffrey of Monmouth, c. 1154

The most famous of these twelfth-century chroniclers is Geoffrey of Monmouth, whose *History of the Kings of Britain*, written in Latin, was a curious literary imposture that proved to be of inestimable value to English poetry. Under the influence of French popular literature there was a growing taste for romantic stories; also as the French and English became united in a spirit of new nationality there was a natural desire to know the origin and early history of Britain. Geoffrey measured the popular taste and satisfied it with the skill of a modern journalist. Where facts failed him, he invented. That the nation might have as lofty an origin as that of Rome, he made the Trojan Brutus its mythical founder; and henceforth England had its national epics called *Bruts*, as Rome had its *Æneids*.

But the most important part of his work was to gather up

[1] Cambridge History of English Literature, vol. I, 184.

current Welsh legends of which Arthur was the central figure, and to establish this hero as king of a splendid realm of mediæval romance. In Geoffrey's work we first become acquainted with Arthur, Guinevere, Sir Mordred and Merlin, and also Lear, Cymbeline, and Milton's Sabrina, "virgin daughter of Locrine." To this old chronicler, who scandalized the pious historians of the monasteries with his audacious stories, the poets of all subsequent ages owe a large debt of gratitude. The appearance of truth was given to his narrative by material derived from Bede and the standard authorities of his time. His work was immensely popular, as shown by the scores of manuscripts still in existence. But before the close of the century, there were those who boldly denounced Geoffrey as an unscrupulous fabler. Says William of Newbury: "In this book that he calls the History of the Britons, how saucily and how shamelessly he lies almost throughout, no one, unless ignorant of the old histories, can doubt." But poetry is more vital than history, and the sober brothers of the monasteries were harboring a poet in their midst unawares.

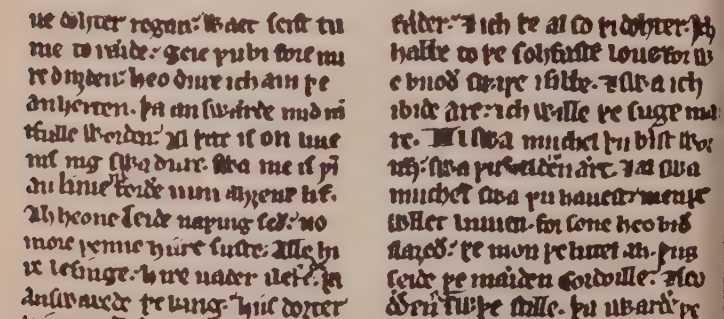
Geoffrey's Contribution to Poetry

From this remote source in Geoffrey's fabulous history has flowed the delectable stream of English romantic poetry, reaching its serenest depths in the *Idylls of the King*. It is pleasant to associate the name of Tennyson with that of Layamon, whose *Brut* was the first important poem written in the native tongue, after a century and a half of silence. A Norman poet, Wace, had translated Geoffrey's book into French verse and this was the basis of Layamon's poem. Wace's *Brut* is doubled in length by Layamon, and the best matter of the poem is in the added portions. It was the ambition, apparently, of each of these romancers to make some contribution to the growing stock of national fiction. In Wace's poem, for example, is the first mention of the Round Table, of which, he says, "the Bretons tell many a strange tale"; in Layamon's poem a full account of its origin

Layamon's Brut, c. 1205

is produced, and also of the mysterious isle of Avilion and the passing of Arthur thither to be healed of his grievous wound.

More than a third of Layamon's work is given to the stories of Arthur. In the earlier tales common to Wales and Brittany Arthur is a shadowy and ineffective personality, but in Layamon's poem the character is developed into the ideal English hero, endowed with noble generosity, knightly courtesy, and devotion to religion and the welfare of his people.



A PORTION OF THE MANUSCRIPT OF LAYAMON'S BRUT

We know nothing of this Layamon except the little he says of himself at the opening of the poem. He was a priest dwelling "at Ernley, at a noble church upon Severn bank." Here on the enchanted borderland of Wales his mind was wrought upon by the stories of fays, giants, nixies, and all the strange denizens of elf-land. With a touch of charming simplicity he explains the purpose of his poem: "It came to him in mind, and in

his chief thought, that he would tell the noble deeds of England." And he tells his story like an Englishman of the earliest type, being at his best in describing the clash of arms or a raging storm. The poem in language and form is transitional. In vocabulary it is pure Saxon, containing in its 32,250 lines less than fifty words of French origin. In form it is a compromise, retaining the old alliterative line of Anglo-Saxon verse, and adding an occasional rhyme in the new fashion of French verse. "The ancient rules half forgotten are blended with the new only half understood." And here is the way he began his great task:—

Layamon and his Poem

Laȝamon gon liðen wide ȝond þas leode,
& bi-won þa æðela boc þa he to bisne nom.
He nom þa Englisca boc þa makede seint Beda;
an oþer he nom on Latin þe makede seinte Albin,
& þe feire Austin þe fulluht broute hider in.
boc he nom þe þridde, leide þer amidden,
þa makede a Frenchis clerc, Wace wes ihoten,
þe wel couþe writen; & he heo ȝef þare æðelen
Ælienor þe wes Henries quene, þes heȝes kinges.
Laȝamon leide þeos boc & þa leaf wende.
he heom leofliche bi-heold, liþe him beo drihten.
feþeren he nom mid fingren & fiede on boc-felle,
& þa soþe word sette to-gadere,
& þa þre boc þrumde to are.

Layamon began to journey wide over this land,
And obtained the noble books which he for pattern took.
He took the English book that Saint Bede made;
Another he took in Latin that Saint Albin made,
And the fair Austin, who brought baptism in hither.
The third book he took, laid there in the midst,
That a French clerk made, Wace was he called,
Who well could write; and he gave it to the noble
Eleanor who was Henry's queen, the high king.
Layamon laid [open] these books and turned the leaves,
Lovingly he beheld them, may the Lord be good to him!
Pen he took with fingers and wrote on book-skin,
And the true words set together,
And the three books compressed into one.

Another poem produced at about the same time as the *Brut*, and similarly interesting for its transitional features, is the *Ormulum*, a paraphrase of the gospels beaten into monotonous verse by an Augustinian monk who calls himself "Orm":

Þiss boc iss nemmnedd Orrmulum, forrþi þatt Orrm itt wrohhte.

This book is named Ormulum, because that Orm it wrote.

This is all that we know of the modest author, except that the poem shows him to have been simple, devout, and deeply solicitous for the religious welfare of his fellow-men. He adopted a common Latin meter for his poem, and used neither alliteration nor rhyme. With a metrical precision sustained remarkably through ten thousand lines, each line is measured off into fifteen syllables with the exactness of clock-beats. To aid the reader, he indicated the short vowels by doubling the following consonants. The vocabulary of the poem reveals hardly more than a half-dozen French words, but it is the last work that shows this loyalty to the native speech; henceforth there was little resistance, in the literary vocabulary, to the pressure of the French.

Orm's Ormulum, c. 1215

Until well into the fourteenth century, the main stream of literature in the native tongue continued to be religious, influenced by the native seriousness of mind, the traditions of Cædmon and his followers, and the oppression of a foreign government. The romantic impulse of Layamon long remained an isolated exception. There were many elaborate attempts at poetry, but that which has survived is interesting mainly as an evidence of the prodigious patience of monastic poets in versifying the Scriptures, legends, lives of saints, the psalter, and practical sermons. The writing was done, however, with love and devotion, and sometimes with touches of poetic spirit that relieve the long stretches of didactic commonplace. In these dusty and time-

Monastic Poetry

stained productions one gets an intimate knowledge of the life and thought of the people that can nowhere else be found.

Like the *Ormulum* in its purpose of popular instruction is the metrical paraphrase called *Genesis and Exodus*, written about 1250. The title recalls Cædmon and suggests the continued tendency toward religious themes. Like books for children in words of one syllable, the good poet tells his Bible stories in "londes speche and wordes smale," and says that "Christian men who hear the story of salvation in little words of their own land's speech should be as glad as birds are at the coming of the dawn."

Genesis and Exodus

A quaint form of poetry of about the same date is the *Bestiary*, a kind of fantastic natural history, in which the habits of animals and birds are made to symbolize moral and spiritual

AN ILLUSTRATION FROM A BESTIARY BOOK

truths. The dove, for example, "hath no gall, so simple and soft should we be all; she liveth nought by prey, so we should not rob; she leaveth the worm and liveth upon the seed, so of Christ's lore we have need; like lamenting is her song, so should we lament, for we have done wrong; in a hole of the rock she maketh her nest, so in Christ's mercy our hope is best." Such books had been popular from ancient Greek times, and were utilized by the early Christian fathers for the purposes of religious instruction.

Bestiaries

One prose work of the thirteenth century, the *Ancren Riwle*, or Rule of the Anchoresses, must be noticed for its singular excellence. It was written by an unknown monk for the guidance of three women who determined to live in seclusion like nuns. His kindly instructions include the minutest matters of both worldly and spiritual care, even the rule that they "shall have no beast but one cat." Professor Earle regards this work as "one of the most perfect models of simple, natural, eloquent prose in our language." A brief passage will illustrate the language and the lofty sentiment:—

Ancren Riwle, c. 1225

Bi deie summe time oþer bi nihte, þencheð & gedereð in owre heorte alle sike & alle sorie, þet wo & pouerte þolieð, þe pine þet prisuns þolieð; þet heo liggeð mid iren heuie iveotered; nomeliche of ðe Cristene þet beoð ine hepinesse, summe ine prisune, summe ine alse muchele ðeudome alse oxe is oþer asse; habbeð reoupe of þeo þet beoð ine stronge temptaciuns; alle monne sores setteð in ower þouhte.

At some time in the day or the night, think upon and call to mind all who are sick and sorrowful, who suffer affliction and poverty, the pain that prisoners endure, who lie heavily fettered with iron; especially of the Christians who are among the heathen, some in prison, some in as great thraldom as is an ox or an ass; have pity for those that are under strong temptations; take thought for all men's sorrows.

Early in the fourteenth century appeared the *Cursor Mundi* (the Over-runner of the World), a metrical paraphrase of Scripture containing the story of the world from creation to the day of doom. The unknown writer had noted with pious sympathy that since French poetry became fashionable, those who "na French can" had no books for their amusement and profit. So he supplied the need with this huge poem of thirty thousand lines, a well-seasoned mixture of Bible narratives, Latin history, and popular legends. The work was deservedly popular, for the fertile versifier often tells a good story, and shows a human enjoyment in the telling. English gravity was slowly melting before the warmer breezes of France.

Cursor Mundi, c. 1320

But the best religious story-teller of the period is Robert Mannyng of Brunne, whose *Handlyng Synne*, translated from a crude French poem written by an Englishman, is a really excellent story-book. The unlearned people, he says, will have their stories, good or bad, and he determines to give them stories that will make for their salvation rather than for their perdition. So he illustrates with apt tales the ten commandments, the seven deadly sins, and the seven sacraments. Contemporary affairs are noticed, especially the sufferings of the poor at the hands of the rich. Like Chaucer, the poet draws a vivid picture of good and bad priests. This work and the *Cursor Mundi* were manifestly written to compete with the romantic stories of the French type, which were now taking possession of the literary field.

Mannyng's Handlyng Synne, 1303

In the works of Richard Rolle de Hampole, a Yorkshire hermit, we come to original authorship with which a definite knowledge of the author can be associated. Richard Rolle was famous in his own time for his writings in both Latin and English, for his efforts as a religious reformer, and for his devout life. In the popular regard he was a saint, and after his death his hermit's cell at Hampole was a shrine for sacred pilgrimages. His chief work is *The Pricke of Conscience*, a versified sermon in seven books, dealing with the whole life of man, from birth to doomsday. The poem, he explains, is to be a prick or goad for the conscience:—

Richard Rolle de Hampole, c. 1290–1349

> For if a man rede and understande well
> And þe materes þarin til[1] hert[2] wil take,
> It may his conscience tendre make;
> And til right way of rewel[3] bryng it bilyfe[4]
> And his hert til drede and mekenes dryfe,[5]
> And til luf,[6] and yhernyng[7] of heven blis,
> And to amende alle þat he has done mys.[8]

Two poems incomparably better in artistic merit than any yet noticed in this group are *A Love-Rune* by Thomas de Hales

[1] to [2] heart [3] rule [4] quickly [5] drive [6] love [7] yearning [8] amiss

and *The Pearl* by an unknown author. The first is a charming lyric in stanzaic form, expressing with a sweet and tender seriousness the most exalted religious feeling. To a maid who asks the poet-monk for a love-song that may guide her in the choice of a lover, he explains how shallow and fleeting is earthly love in comparison with the perfect love of Christ.

A Love-Rune

The Pearl is an outpouring of a father's grief for the loss of his little Margaret, "my precious perle wythouten spot," intensely human and beautiful in expression. "True Pearl of our poet prime," Tennyson called it. The father falls asleep upon the grave of his little one, and in a dream sees a strange land of light and beauty across a stream flowing musically over pebbles that glitter like stars in a winter night. He knows this land must be Paradise, and soon he sees his child, with face white as pure ivory, sitting beneath a crystal cliff. She tells him that he cannot come to her, urges upon him the duty of Christian resignation, and assures him that his Pearl is not lost, but is in a gracious garden where no sin can be. In a vain struggle to cross the river, the father awakes to find his head still on the little grass-grown grave of his child.

The Pearl, c. 1360

Many believe the poem to be pure allegory, for which there was an increasing fondness among poets, but the note of personal emotion seems too clear and direct to be merely the voice of a religious poet preaching in allegorical verse. The twelve-line stanzas, containing both alliteration and rhyme, are intricate and difficult in structure. The opening stanza, in Miss Jewett's translation, fairly reproduces the original:—

Pearl that the Prince full well might prize,
So surely set in shining gold!
No pearl of Orient with her vies;
To prove her peerless I make bold:
So round, so radiant to mine eyes,
So smooth she seemed, so small to hold,
Among all jewels judges wise

Would count her best an hundredfold.
Alas! I lost my pearl of old!
I pine with heart-pain unforgot;
Down through my arbor grass it rolled,
My own pearl, precious, without spot.

Metrical Romances

The most characteristic and widely prevalent form of literature in the Middle Ages was the metrical romance, which reached its highest development in France. The substance of this poetry was the glorification of chivalry and the ideals of feudal society. In the pages of these interminable tales we find a vivid picture of the artificial life, refinement, and culture of the higher classes in Europe in the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries. The pomp and pageantry of tournaments, gorgeous feasts, slaughter of pagans, and fantastic adventures in a world of magic, giants, and dragons, as described in these romances, seem to the modern mind utterly childish, but to the mediæval mind they represented noble ideals of conduct. The best of these romances gave to literature a creative impulse that has been felt through all succeeding centuries. Scott's romances are only a subsequent chapter in the great novel of heroic adventure that began with these tales. "The old French romances," says Professor Schofield, "are the glory of chivalry, as Gothic cathedrals are of Catholic worship. Both witness to the lofty idealism of the mediæval world and embody materially its spiritual vision."

At the Battle of Hastings, we are told, the minstrel Taillefer led the Norman army, tossing and catching his glittering sword and singing the *Song of Roland*, the great national romance of France, thus symbolizing the contribution about to be made by the Normans to English life and thought. The heavy clouds of Saxon gloom were soon to be in large measure cleared away by warm light from the sunny south. Queen Eleanor, wife of Henry II, brought to her court the Troubadours, those light-hearted masters of "the gay science" of

Provence, whose dainty lyrics of sunshine and love still charm every lover and maker of poetry. In Normandy, there was another class of singers, the Trouvères, who chanted in the halls of the feudal chieftains their *chansons de geste*, which were long tales of knightly adventure. These were the two forms of French poetry, lyric and epic, that were now brought to England, the Troubadour's happy song and the Trouvère's endless story.

Troubadours and Trouveres

A new minstrelsy filled the land. The old Saxon gleeman was succeeded by the sprightly *jongleur*, who could add to his song now and then a dance and a sleight-of-hand trick. There was music everywhere, more joyous and refined than the Englishman had ever known. There was a minstrels' gallery in every great Norman hall and sometimes even in the cathedrals, as one may still see at Exeter. Kings and princes all kept minstrels in their pay. Four hundred and twenty-six musicians were employed at the marriage of Margaret, daughter of Edward I. Indeed, as the wounds of the Conquest healed, the English, at first only astonished observers of the merrymaking, gradually caught the spirit of their French companions, and joined in the sport. The beginning of "merry England" was at hand.

The Heyday of Minstrelsy

In this atmosphere of music and light-spirited revelry the romances flourished with immense popularity. The Englishman of old had loved heroic tales, and now he had such tales in a new form, refined and varied in manifold ways. The author of *Cursor Mundi* thus explains the levity of his poem:—

Cycles of Romance

> Men lykyn jestis for to here
> And romans rede in divers manere
> Of Alexandre the conqueroure,
> Of Julius Cesar the emperoure . . .
> Stories of diverce thynggis
> Of pryncis, prelatis and of kynggis,
> Many songgis of divers ryme,
> As English, French, and Latyne.

The materials for these French romances were drawn from world-wide sources: classic antiquity, history, legend, contemporary adventure, superstition, and folk-lore. There were three cycles or groups of such stories, called the "matter" of Rome, of France, and of Britain. In the first cycle are the stories of Alexander and of Troy. In the second cycle Charlemagne is the central figure, and of these stories the *Song of Roland* is most famous.

The stories of the third cycle are grouped about King Arthur, and include the tales of *Sir Tristrem*, *Morte d'Arthur*, *Lancelot of the Lake*, and the others that celebrate the Round Table. Naturally this "matter of Britain" was most readily appropriated in England. As early perhaps as the sixth century the legends of Arthur had been carried from Wales and Cornwall to the kindred Celts of Brittany. Expanded and refined by the Trouvères, they now recrossed the Channel to take final root in their native soil. These romances were long known only in French, for French was the language of culture in England until the middle of the fourteenth century. With the closer union of the people, they were translated, adapted to English tastes, and finally imitated in stories of home origin, such as *Guy of Warwick*, *Bevis of Hampton*, *King Horn*, and *Havelock the Dane*.

Arthurian Cycle

The typical romance is a long, rambling description of marvelous adventures, with little or no coherence of plot. The characters are noble knights of prodigious strength, fair ladies with lily-white faces and gentle as the dove, giants, Saracens, enchanters, dragons, and other monsters friendly with Satan. Nothing that the poet can invent is too extravagant. Alexander goes down to the bottom of the sea in a glass barrel. Sir Guy slays one hundred men in succession as naturally as a farmer cuts his cornstalks. Lancelot and Madur fight with swords "from morn to evening," and Saracens always fall "like grain before the scythe." The business of life is fighting for the

Characteristics of the Romances

feudal lord, for religion, and for noble ladies in distress. In the early romances love does not appear as a motive. Roland loves only his country and his sword Durandel. In the Arthurian cycle, however, love becomes the main theme, reaching its highest beauty and intensity of expression in *Tristan and Iseult*. In England the romance also gradually took on a deeper religious color, which reached its finest form in the allegories of *The Holy Grail*.

The versification in the original French was very exact in structure, consisting of a succession of short rhymed lines, tending to intolerable monotony. The form was much modified by contact with the long alliterative line of old English verse, and from the union of the two forms arose a more flexible and varied form that preserved the best features of both. It was the tediously tripping rhymes and padded verses of the French type that Chaucer so cleverly ridiculed in his "rym dogerel" of *Sir Topas*. Here is a fair sample from *Sir Perceval:*—

Artistic Form

His righte name was Percyvelle,
He was fosterde in the felle,[1]
He dranke water of the welle,
And yitte was he wyghte![2]
His fadir was a noble mane
Fro[3] the tyme that he began;
Miche worshippe[4] he wanne[5]
When he was made knyghte;
In Kyng Arthures haulle,[6]
Beste by-luffede[7] of alle,
Percyvelle they gone[8] hym calle,
Who so redis[9] ryghte.

One late addition to the Arthurian Cycle has such poetic merit as to deserve special study. This is *Sir Gawayne and the Grene Knight*, "the most delightful blossom of all pre-Chaucerian romance." It was probably written about the middle of the fourteenth century. A single manuscript contained this

[1] moor [2] strong [3] from [4] much honor [5] won [6] hall [7] beloved [8] did [9] reads

poem, *The Pearl*, and two didactic poems, *Cleanness* and *Patience*. All are believed to be the work of one poet, who was easily the greatest poet between Cædmon and Chaucer. The poem is an allegory, anticipating Spenser's *Faerie Queene* in its vague suggestions of hidden moral truth. Sir Gawayne is the knight of chastity. In a series of adventures into which he is drawn by the plot of a fay-woman, he proves his quality, but in his final encounter with the giant Green Knight he receives a slight wound because in one small particular he has been unfaithful. The charm of the poem is in its freshness and genuineness of feeling, picturesque language, bright fancy, vivid pictures of nature, and detailed descriptions of the manners and customs of the times.

Sir Gawayne and the Grene Knight

The poem is artistically constructed, having a well-devised and rounded plot, and is written in alliterative verse, divided into stanzas, each stanza ending with a rhymed refrain. One stanza, with modernized spelling, from the description of Arthur's court with which the poem opens, will illustrate some of its features:—

This King lay at Camelot upon Christmas,
With many lovely lords, ladies of the best,
Rekenly [1] of the Round Table all those rich brethren,
With rich revel aright, and rechles [2] mirths;
There tourneyed tulkes [3] betimes full many,
Jousted full jollily these gentle knights,
Then kayred [4] to the court carols to make.
For there the feast was alike full fifteen days.
With all the meat and the mirth that men could avise;
Such glaumande [5] glee glorious to hear,
Dere [6] din upon day, dancing on nights,
All was hap [7] upon high in halls and chambers,
With lords and ladies, as liefest [8] to them seemed;
With all the weal of the world they woned [9] there together.
The most kind knights under Christ's self,
And the loveliest ladies that ever life had,
And the comeliest king that the court holds;

[1] nobly [2] careless [3] warriors [4] went [5] boisterous [6] joyful
[7] good fortune [8] most pleasing [9] dwelt

For all these fair folk were in their first age,
On sille;[1]
The happiest under heaven,
King highest man of will,
It were now great nye[2] to neven[3]
So hardy a here[4] on hill.

In the last part of the thirteenth century, in happy contrast with the long dull stretches of didactic verse and tiresome romance, there was an outburst of genuine lyric poetry, charming in itself and more precious in its promise for the future than anything that had yet appeared. A few pretty songs of love, springtime, and flowers have been preserved. One of the brightest is the song of the cuckoo, spring's earliest minstrel, far-away harbinger of Wordsworth and Shelley, and the others whose songs of nature gladden the heart of the world:—

Lyric Poetry

Sumer is icumen in, lhude[5] sing, cuccu;
Groweth sed and bloweth med and springeth the wude nu;[6]
Sing cuccu.
Awe[7] bleteth after lomb, lhouth[8] after calve cu;
Bulluc sterteth,[9] bucke verteth, murie sing, cuccu.
Cuccu, cuccu,
Well singes thu, cuccu; ne swik[10] thu naver nu.

By peculiar good fortune the music has been preserved to which this song was set. A song of Lent is full of the delight of fields, joyous with daisies and bird notes:—

Lenten ys come with love to toune,
With blosmen ant with briddes roune,[11]
That al this blisse bryngeth;
Dayes-eyes in this dales,
Notes suete of nyghtengales,
Uch foul[12] song singeth.

There is the same breath of sweet nature in *The Owl and Nightingale*, a long poem of peculiar interest for its naturalness, originality of form and expression, reflection of common life,

[1] seat [2] annoy [3] name [4] host [5] loud [6] now
[7] ewe [8] lows [9] leaps [10] cease [11] birds' song [12] every bird

and timid touches of humor. It is a dialogue between the owl and the nightingale, in which each claims to be superior to the other. In some pretty word pictures the nightingale explains his inspiration. The blossoms in the trees and on the mead bid him sing and—

> The rose also mid hire rude,[1]
> That cumeth ut[2] of the thornewude,
> Bit[3] me that ich[4] shalle singe,
> Vor[5] hire luve, one skentinge.[6]

With the close of the Anglo-Norman period, a new nation had been created, with a new national life and language, and the ground was ready for the foundations of a national literature. The people were no longer Saxons and Normans, but Englishmen. Edward's struggle for supremacy in France was ended in 1362 by the treaty of Bretigny, and England settled down to the peaceful development of an independent life.

The diversities of speech had gradually disappeared. Norman and Saxon each contributed characteristic elements to the new language. From the Saxon the grammatical foundations survived, the articles, pronouns, prepositions, and conjunctions; the substantial every-day words, short and forcible words expressing concrete things —the warp of the language. To this the Norman added courtly words of refinement and luxury, abstract words expressing subtleties of intellect and sentiment, smooth rhythmical many-syllabled words—the soft, glossy filling or woof of the language. Even fashionable people were forgetting their French, or laughing at its provincial character, as Chaucer laughed at the Prioress's "French of Stratford-at-the-Bow." About the year 1385, according to John of Trevisa, "in alle the gramere-scoles of Engelond, children leveth Frensche and construeth and lerneth an Englische," indeed, they "conneth[7] no more Frensche than can hir lift heele[8]." In 1362 the king for the

The Union of Languages

[1] her redness [2] out [3] biddeth [4] I [5] for [6] merry song
[7] know [8] than their left heel knows

first time opened Parliament with an address in English, and in the same year official sanction was given to this language by a statute of the realm, ordering English to be used in the pleadings of the law courts, for the reason that "the French tongue is much unknown."

With the union of speech came the union of literary interests. We have found two streams of literary expression flowing alongside and gradually approaching each other; the Saxon literature, limited in range, religious in theme and didactic in purpose, rude and homely in form; the Norman literature, gay, secular, varied, polished and graceful in form, ministering to a cultivated aristocracy. Each absorbed by contact the other's qualities; the Norman became more serious and religious, and the Saxon became more elastic and refined. The native seriousness culminated in Wyclif and Langland, the foreign joyousness in Chaucer and Gower. Henceforth there was only one great current, flowing in an ever-deepening and widening channel.

The Union of Literatures

PROGRAM OF WORK

CLASS READING. Selections from Layamon's *Brut*, *Ormulum*, *Handlyng Synne*, *Owl and Nightingale*, *Cursor Mundi* (Bronson, P. and S., Manly, Weston, Cook); *A Love-Rune*, *A Song of the Passion*, *A Bestiary* (Weston); *The Pearl* (Jewett, Weir Mitchell, Mead, Weston, Gollancz).

LYRICS: *Cuckoo Song*, *Alysoun*, *Lenten is Come*, *Blow, Winter Wind* (Bronson, Weston, Morris, Manly, P. and S., Cook).

ROMANCES: *Sir Gawayne and the Grene Knight* (Weston, Oxford Treasury, Bronson); *Stories of Arthur* (Newell, Howard Pyle, Lanier); *Legend of the Holy Grail* (Lawrence, ch. v); *Song of Roland* (Butler's prose translation, Lawrence, ch. iii, King's Classics); *King Horn* (Weston); *Aucassin and Nicolete* (Lang).

LITERARY HISTORY. Schofield's *English Literature from the Conquest to Chaucer;* Cambridge History; Jusserand; Ten Brink; Morley's *English Writers;* Ker's *Epic and Romance;* Saintsbury's *Flourishing of Romance and Rise of Allegory;* Preston's *Troubadours and Trouvères*, 151–280; Lawrence's *Mediæval Story;* Weston's

Romance Cycle of Charlemagne and His Peers; Weston's *King Arthur and His Knights;* Nutt's *Legends of the Holy Grail;* Maynadier's *The Arthur of the English Poets;* Ellis's *Specimens of Early English Romances;* Baldwin's *Introduction to English Mediæval Literature;* Bradley's *Making of English; Histories of the English Language* by Lounsbury, Emerson, Champneys; Weston's *Chief Middle English Poets* (translations); Weston's *Romance, Vision and Satire* (translations); Reed's *English Lyrical Poetry.*

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND. Green; Gardiner; Cheyney; Freeman's *Short History of the Norman Conquest;* Freeman's *William the Conqueror;* Green's *Henry II;* Tout's *Edward I* (Eng. Statesmen Series); Traill's *Social England;* Jewett's *Story of the Normans;* Jusserand's *Wayfaring Life in the Fourteenth Century;* Newell's *King Arthur and the Round Table;* Archer and Kingsford's *The Crusades;* Scott's *Ivanhoe;* Kingsley's *Hereward the Wake.*

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION AND RESEARCH

1. Trace the progress of the Normans from their original home (consult Jewett). 2. Compare the Norman with the Saxon characteristics. 3. Suppose there had been no Battle of Hastings? 4. Effect of the Conquest upon the language (Cambridge History, vol. I, ch. xix; Lounsbury; Champneys).

5. Account for the condition of literature during the first half of this transition period. 6. Indebtedness of English literature to Geoffrey of Monmouth. 7. Growth of the Arthurian romances in France and England. 8. The "Matter of Britain" (Saintsbury's *Flourishing of Romance*, ch. iii). 9. Compare a typical romance, *Guy of Warwick*, for example, with one of Scott's or of Stevenson's. 10. Compare *Sir Gawayne and the Grene Knight* with *Beowulf.*

11. Explain the transitional character of Layamon's *Brut.* 12. Compare the passage beginning, "And I will fare to Avilion," with the corresponding passage in Tennyson's *Passing of Arthur.* 13. Evidence in the *Ormulum* of the uncertain state of pronunciation. 14. Compare, in respect to language and versification, *The Pricke of Conscience*, *c.* 1330, with Layamon's *Brut*, *c.* 1205. 15. Read and discuss *The Pearl.*

16. The Troubadours in France, their life and poetry. 17. Read some of the dainty revivals of Troubadour minstrelsy by Gosse, Dobson, Lang, and others (Gleeson White's *Ballades and Rondeaus*). 18. Study the forms of these lyrics (Alden's *Introduction to Poetry*, 332–339). 19. Account for the lyrical outburst at the end of the thirteenth century. 20. Importance of the date, 1362, in respect to English history, literature, and language.

CHAPTER III

THE AGE OF CHAUCER

1360–1400

EDWARD III came to the throne in 1327 and ruled fifty years. During this long reign modern England was established, and the characteristics of the Englishman of to-day are the product of the blending of diverse elements that was completed in that period. The feeling of a distinct nationality was increased by foreign war, and patriotic enthusiasm was aroused by the glorious victories of Cressy and Poitiers. Parliament, first convened in 1295, was cementing the different classes of society into political unity and giving form to a representative government. Wealth increased rapidly, commerce was established, and already the sovereign was called "King of the Sea." The Flemish weavers were invited to the island, and England's vast woollen industry began. The great merchants became powerful, loaned money to the king, and many, like Whittington with his famous cat, were made lord mayors, dukes, and earls.

Reign of Edward III

With wealth came luxury, art, and extravagant pleasures. One of the Princess Margaret's wedding gifts was a rope of two thousand pearls. Women wore rich silks, embroideries, and jewels brought from the Orient. Architecture became more beautiful; castles were less military and more domestic and habitable, and the living was more sumptuous and civilized. Chivalry as a social institution began to give way to more practical theories of life, but

Life of the Aristocracy

its glamour still remained, and life was sacrificed for a ribbon in gorgeous tournaments. Knights and fair ladies rode gaily to the hunt with falcon and sleek greyhound. Men began to travel for pleasure. "They are great walkers and great horsemen," says the chronicler Higden in his *Polychronicon*. "They roam over all lands, are curious, and like to tell the wonders they have seen and observed. They spread over the earth; every land they inhabit becomes as their own country." Thus the seeds of colonial wealth and power were already planted.

But there were strongly contrasted elements in this new and progressive civilization. The pomp and pageantry of war and the grand sports of an idle aristocracy imposed heavy burdens of taxation upon the laboring classes. Added to this was the calamity of the Black Death, which appeared four times between 1348 and 1375, sweeping off half of the population. And worst of all were the burdens of the church. Parliament complained that five times the taxes paid to the king were paid to Rome, a grievous wrong, since "God gave his sheep to be pastured, not to be shaven and shorn." For the rich, religion was no longer an effective restraint upon vice, and for the poor its sustaining and consoling power was fading away. Out of such conditions would naturally arise the voice of satire and reform. Langland and Wyclif expressed the bitter murmurings and stern protests of the people.

Life of the Common People

The elusive figure of William Langland can be made out only by scholarly guesswork, applied to the personal allusions in his great poem, *The Vision of Piers Plowman*. Indeed the three principal versions of the poem differ so widely in many important respects as to lead to the belief that three or four authors had a hand in the making of the poem. But we may continue to believe that the original author was born about 1332 near Malvern, not far from Ernley, where Layamon lived and wrote his *Brut*. Evidently he was a man of the soil, intimate

with the life of the common people, but well educated, familiar with French and Latin, and broadly desirous of knowledge. He would know "alle the sciences under sonne and all the sotyle craftes," but artlessly confesses that he is "loth for to stodie." He was a man of imagination and deep feeling, mystical in his religious ideas, but keen and practical when dealing with every-day life. Like many another, he had trouble with theology. "The more I muse there-inne, the mistier it seemeth," he says. Though holding an inferior position in the church, he was a good deal of a vagabond and spent his days "roaming about robed in russet," studying all sorts and conditions of men; and as he reflected upon the evils of society, he was filled with an intense desire to help men lead better lives, especially the poor laboring classes, with whom he was most in sympathy.

William Langland, c. 1332–c. 1400

The poem opens with a pleasant glimpse of the Malvern hills and the plain below the town. The poet falls asleep by a rippling brook and has a wonderful dream:—

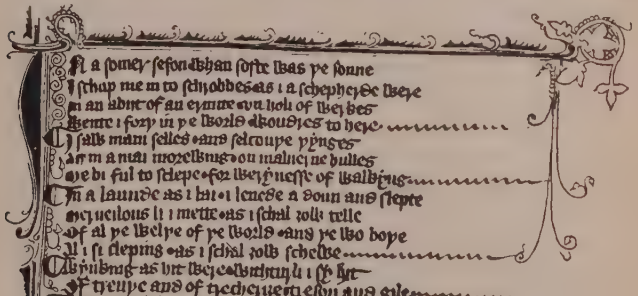
In a somer seson whan softe was the sonne,
I shoop[1] me into shroudes[2] as I a sheep[3] were,
In habite as an hermite unholy of werkes,
Went wide in this world wondres to here;
Ac[4] on a May morwenynge on Malwerne hilles
Me bifel a ferly,[5] of fairye[6] me thoghte.
I was wery for-wandred[7] and went me to reste
Under a brood[8] bank by a bournes[9] syde;
And as I lay and lenede and loked on the watres,
I slombred into a slepyng, it sweyed[10] so murye.[11]
Thanne gan I meten[12] a marveillous swevene.[13]

In this "swevene," or dream, he sees "a fair feld ful of folke," types of all classes of people gathered in a motley throng, all busy with the world's work, which is mainly vain or evil work.

[1] shaped, arrayed myself [2] clothes [3] shepherd [4] but [5] wonder, marvel [6] enchantment [7] weary with wandering [8] broad [9] burn, brook [10] sounded [11] merry [12] dream [13] dream.

There are knights, plowmen, beggars, minstrels who "geten gold with hire glee," pilgrims and palmers returned from Rome with "leve to lyen al hire lif after," hermits, friars of "alle the four orders," cooks crying "hote pyes, hote," brewers, "woollen webbesters," and "many othere craftes." There are also allegorical characters in the company. "Holy Church" explains the scene to the poet and shows the people the true way of life. "Lady Meed" appears everywhere, an important but questionable character, for meed, that is, reward or self-

Vision of Piers Plowman, 1362



A PORTION OF THE MANUSCRIPT OF PIERS PLOWMAN

interest, may easily become bribery, tempting men to evil conduct. Therefore "Conscience" objects to a marriage with Lady Meed, which the king has decreed.

In the incoherent manner of dreams, the scene of the poem is suddenly shifted, and the Seven Deadly Sins are seen making their confession to "Repentance." This passage is remarkable for its weird realism, picturing the degenerate life of the period; for the personified sins are real living sinners. They call upon Piers Plowman to lead them to "Truth." He agrees to do so, but first puts everybody to work. The lazy he brings to time by the aid of "Hunger,"

Satire and Allegory

thus preaching the practical gospel of salvation through honest work which Carlyle preached so persistently five hundred years later.

Throughout the poem the representatives of the church are vigorously chastised for their worldliness. Langland is more bitter than Chaucer in his satire against the pleasure-loving clergy:—

> And now is religion a rider, a roamer by streets,
> A leader of love-dayes, and a land-buyer,
> A priker on a palfrey from manor to manor.

The personality of the Plowman is at first that of a typical laborer, superior in character and judgment, whose heart is with the people and whose desire is to save them from their follies and sins. As the poem develops, the character is idealized and exalted, until finally the Plowman is identified with the Saviour. In a strong and almost dramatic description of the triumph of Christ over the powers of Hell, the poem closes, and the poet is awakened by the glad sound of Easter bells.

The Plowman

The poem is written in alliterative verse, the last English poem to preserve the ancient form of *Beowulf*. This feature pleased the common people and emphasized the contrast with the frivolous poetry of fashion. Words of French origin are almost as numerous as in Chaucer, showing the complete fusion of the languages. The allegory, unlike that of most mediæval poetry, is clear and positive, and often strikingly anticipates Bunyan. But the immense popularity of the poem was due mainly to the intense earnestness of the author. "No poem has been more truly lived than this one," says Jusserand; "it was the author's shelter, his real house, his real church; he always came back there to pray, to tell his sorrows—to live in it." This poor wandering priest, unknown perhaps even to his own generation, did for the lower classes what Chaucer did for the higher, and

The People's Poem

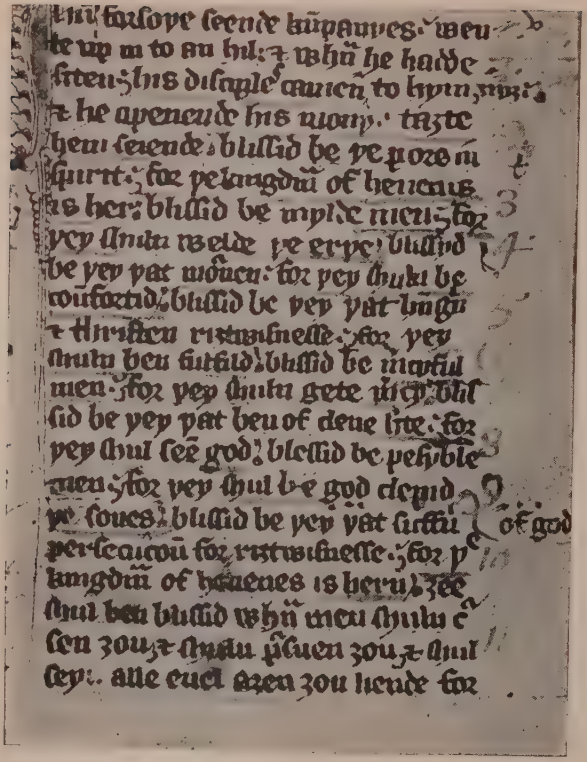
with Chaucer he shares the poetic fame of the fourteenth century.

Very different from Langland in his work for the people was John Wyclif, the first great English reformer. As a scholar, educated at Oxford and for many years Master of Balliol College, learned in all the subtleties of theology and skilled in logical controversy, and as a reformer defended by the government of the realm and anathematized by the Pope at Rome, he was one of the most imposing figures of the period. He was the last of the great schoolmen of the Middle Ages, and the first to revolt against scholastic theology and to preach the new theology of the Reformation. He stood at the parting of the ways between the old and the new in religion, mediævalism and modernism, and what he attempted was accomplished two hundred years later. He was the first Protestant. With deep indignation at the degeneracy of the church and with a burning desire to give the people a pure religion, he rejected traditions and dogmas, and appealed directly to the Scriptures as a guide to faith and conduct. Finally, for his bold attacks upon church doctrine, he was charged with heresy and forced to retire from Oxford. Of his character and personal appearance a disciple says that he was "held by many the holiest of all in his day, lean of body, spare and almost deprived of strength, most pure in his life."

John Wyclif, 1324–1384

Wyclif's teachings were extended by "poor priests" who went about the country in the garb of poverty, preaching the new doctrines of a simple religion. Later his followers were known as Lollards; they were persecuted and finally suppressed by the government. His direct personal influence was exercised through innumerable sermons and treatises, sometimes in Latin, but generally in the simple language of the people, enlivened at times with impassioned eloquence, bitter irony, and homely humor.

Wyclif's greatest achievement, however, was in giving to the world the first complete English translation of the Bible. This



FROM WYCLIF'S NEW TESTAMENT, 1380

was a necessary part of his plan to bring the people into direct contact with the sources of religious life. Only a small part of the work was done by himself, probably the Gospels and possibly other portions of the New Testament. The larger part was done by Nicholas of Hereford, one of Wyclif's Oxford associates. No other single work has had so great an influence upon English literature as

The First English Bible

the English Bible. The language, the simple idiomatic expression, the imagery as well as the thought, became a part of the daily thought and expression of all classes of people. From the first, it has served as a permanent model of language and of style; and the importance of Wyclif's version as a literary force justifies the title generally bestowed upon him in literary history, "Father of English prose." Like all translations made before the Reformation, this was from the Latin Vulgate, itself a translation, but accepted as authority by the church. As the original Greek and Hebrew texts became available, changes were inevitable. But how remarkably like the latest revised version is Wyclif's version, especially in its simple, forceful Saxon vocabulary, may be seen by the comparison of a few verses from the Gospel of St. John:—

In the bygynnynge was the worde, *that is, Goddis sone*, and the worde was at God, and God was the worde. This was in the bigynnynge at God. Alle thingis ben made by hym, and withouten hym is made nought, that thing that is made. In hym was lijf, and the lijf was the lighte of men. And the lighte schyneth in dirkenessis, and dirkenessis comprehenden, *or taken*, not it. A man was sente fro God, to whom the name was Ioon. This man came into witnessynge, that he schulde bere witnessynge of the light that alle men schulde bileve by hym. He was not the light, but that he schulde bere witnessynge of the light. It was verrey lighte the whiche lighteneth eche man comynge into this worlde.

Mandeville's Travels

Another work of this period that gave an impulse to prose literature was the wonderful *Travels* of John Mandeville, Knight, which is still one of the most delightful story-books in our literature. It has now been proved that Sir John himself is as mythical a traveler as Crusoe or Gulliver. The author was not an Englishman, and did not travel, except through the books of history and adventure known in his day. The book was written by a Frenchman sometime before 1371, translated into Latin, then into English, and then into nearly all the languages of Europe. It is estimated that three hundred manuscript copies are still

in existence. The unknown English translator's simple and easy-flowing prose is well fitted to give plausibility to the stories; indeed, so clever is the author's pose of honest simplicity and so persuasive is the language that it is not strange the book was accepted for several centuries as the veritable account of the adventures of the first great English traveler, just as Defoe's fiction was quoted in Parliament as history.

The author shrewdly gaged the taste and credulity of his readers, and gave them a romance in the guise of reality more interesting than the real romances by which they had been educated. He described the wonders of all parts of the earth, known and unknown, Palestine, Egypt, India, Cathay, Ethiopia, "Amazonie," and "many other iles." In the land of the fabulous Prester John he found "many great marvels," such as a gravelly sea, which has no water, yet has very good fish; an enchanted valley inhabited by devils; man-eating giants thirty feet tall; women with precious stones in their eyes who slay men with a look; trees that grow up in a day, bear fruit, and disappear in the ground at night; and the palace of the Emperor built of ivory, jasper, amethyst, sardonyx, gold, and pearls, and lighted at night by great carbuncles. The germs of these marvels can generally be traced to classic literature, mediæval tales of the East, and the curious books of natural history. In an atmosphere of ignorance and miracle the germs were easily developed into amazing prodigies, under the master touches of Sir John's imagination.

Character of the Travels

The *Travels* was a new departure in English literature. Hitherto prose had served the purposes of history and religion only. In its use as a literary instrument England was behind France, where there were already stories artistically written in prose, such as the charming *Aucassin and Nicolete*. Henceforth prose was to compete with verse in the art of entertainment, but nothing to rival the *Travels* appeared until Malory's

Morte d'Arthur one hundred years later. Here is Sir John's description of the apples of paradise:—

Also in that contree, and in othere also, men fynden longe apples to selle, in hire cesoun[1]; and men clepen[2] hem apples of paradys, and thei ben righte swete and of gode savour. And thoghe yee kutte hem in never so many gobettes or parties,[3] overthwart or endlonges, euermore yee schulle fynden in the myddes the figure of the holy cros of our Lord Jesu. But thei wil roten within 8 days, and for that cause men may not carye of the apples to no fer contrees. And thei han grete leves, of a fote and a half of lengthe, and thei ben covenably[4] large. And men fynden there also the appulle tree of Adam, that han a byte at on[5] of the sydes. And there ben also fyge trees, that beren no leves, but fyges upon the smale braunches; and men clepen hem fyges of Pharoon.[6]

Geoffrey Chaucer

c. 1340–1400

The grandest figure of the fourteenth century, overtopping all others like an Alpine peak, is Geoffrey Chaucer, one of the three or four greatest poets of England, and in his own age the greatest poet of Europe. So vastly superior is his poetry to anything that had preceded it, that one can hardly escape a sense of the miraculous in the sudden outburst of such richness. But it was merely nature's miracle of the flood of sunshine and beauty and renewed life at the breaking up of a long, tedious, and lifeless winter. Chaucer was the product of his times, with the added element of pure genius, which is always, in a way, a miracle. In his work English literature had its spring awakening, and with singular fitness his poetry is filled with the spirit of the opening year. The poet's heart is full of the joy of fresh fields and warbling birds; everything happens, with him, in the "merry month of May"; he is the embodiment of the perennial springtime in the heart of man. At the beginning of his poems should be written those "verses of gold" which

The Springtide of English Poetry

[1] their season [2] call [3] pieces or parts [4] proportionately [5] one [6] Pharaoh

he saw in his vision over the gate of the beautiful garden in the *Parlement of Foules:*—

> Thurgh[1] me men gon unto the welle of Grace
> Ther[2] grene and lusty May shal ever endure,
> This is the wey to al[3] good aventure.

The lure of a happy world rejoicing in renewed life is felt by every one who comes to Chaucer with a heart capable of poetic delight. "There is a pervading wholesomeness in the writings of this man," says Lowell, "a vernal property that soothes and refreshes in a way of which no other has ever found the secret. I repeat to myself a thousand times:—

> 'Whan that Aprille with his shoures soote[4]
> The droghte of March hath perced to the roote,
> And bathed every veyne in swich[5] licour
> Of which vertu engendred is the flour;
> Whan Zephirus eek with his swete breeth
> Inspired hath in every holt and heeth
> The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne
> Hath in the Ram his halfe cours y-ronne,
> And smale foweles[6] maken melodye—'

and still at the thousandth time a breath of uncontaminate springtide seems to lift the hair upon my forehead."

Few actual facts of Chaucer's life exist, and these have been preserved not because he was an eminent poet, but because he happened to be connected with royalty. These meager facts, eked out by the inferences contributed by laborious scholarship, give us a picture of the man that must be fairly correct.

Life of Chaucer

He was born about 1340 in Thames Street, London. His father was a vintner, and was once included in the king's retinue on the Continent. Through this connection with the court, quite likely, Chaucer became a page in the household of Prince Lionel. A fragment of the accounts of this household contains an entry of seven shillings for a doublet, red and black breeches, and shoes for

[1] through [2] where [3] all [4] sweet [5] such [6] birds

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

From Occleve's *De Regimine Principum*, preserved among the Harleian Manuscripts in the British Museum

"Goffridus Chaucer." He was with the army in France, was taken prisoner, and ransomed by the king. In 1367 the king granted him a life pension of twenty marks a year with the title *dilectus valettus noster* (our beloved valet). From the position of valet he rapidly rose to be a trusted diplomatist, and was sent abroad on many important missions for the king. The most interesting of these was the mission to Genoa in 1372, when he remained in Italy about a year. It was then, if ever, that Chaucer visited Petrarch at Padua—a possibility which we would like to convert into a certainty.

Chaucer was married to a maid of the queen's chamber, who was probably related to the family of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, a circumstance that would account for some of the many favors which he received from this patron. From the Duke he received in 1374 a grant of ten pounds a year for life, and from the king the grant of a daily pitcher of wine from the royal buttery. For twelve years he was controller of wool customs. In 1386 he was elected to Parliament from Kent, and in 1389 was made clerk of the king's works at Westminster, Windsor, and elsewhere. In his last years he seems to have been afflicted by poverty. In 1398 King Richard granted him a ton of wine yearly in response to a petition begging the favor "for God's sake and as a work of charity," and a year later to Henry IV, the new king, he addressed his serio-comic *Compleynt to his Purse*, which obtained for him a pension of forty marks a year. Ten months later he died, October 25, 1400, and was buried in the chapel of St. Benet, of Westminster Abbey, which, thus consecrated to literary fame, has become the Poets' Corner.

Favors from the Court

The popular notion that poets are mere dreamers, stumbling along the practical pathways of life with "looks commercing with the skies," finds little verification in the life of Chaucer. He was a practical man of affairs, as shown by the many important duties he was selected to perform. His poems were written in the intervals of a busy official career. His knowl-

edge of life—almost Shakespearian in its scope—came from intimate acquaintance with people of all types; and from books he naturally acquired all the polite learning current in the court circle. He knew French, Italian, and Latin, was familiar with all celebrated mediæval authors, and loved especially Ovid and Virgil. He loved dearly to rèad "olde bookes," and "ful oft," he says, made his "heed to ake" with study and writing. In the Prologue to the *Legend of Good Women* he says:—

Education

> And as for me, though that I konne but lyte,[1]
> On bokes for to rede I me delyte,
> And to hem[2] give I feyth and ful credence,
> And in myn herte have hem in reverence.
> So hertely,[3] that ther is game noon[4]
> That from my bokis maketh me to goon,[5]
> But it be seldom on the holyday,
> Save, certynly, whan that the month of May
> Is comen, and that I here the foules synge,
> And that the flouris gynnen for to sprynge,—
> Farewel my boke, and my devocioun!

Then he pours out his praises of the daisy, which of all flowers he loved best. All poets of the time praised the daisy, as a kind of conventional poetic propriety; it was a part of their ritual. But Chaucer's love for it was a real childlike delight. One naturally associates Chaucer's tastes with those of his "Clerk of Oxenford," who of study took "moost cure and moost heede." The precious portrait of Chaucer, drawn in colors on the margin of a manuscript poem by his devoted follower Occleve, is in keeping with his character as revealed in the poems—meditative downcast eyes, broad brow expressive of thought, a face full of tenderness. The Host tells us that he had a portly figure and seemed "forever upon the ground to stare." Efficient business man that he was, a natural aloofness made him a modest observer rather than a leader of men. He cared little for politics and apparently was

Character of Chaucer

[1] know but little [2] them [3] heartily [4] no pleasure [5] go

not affected by patriotic enthusiasm for the great victories of Edward III. He satirized the abuses of the church, but had no thought of being a reformer, like Wyclif. His disposition was one of contentment and compromise. He had no passion for making over the world, which with all its faults seemed to him a very good world to live in. "I serve Joyesse," he said. But he had noble ideals, and a treasury of beautiful precepts can easily be gathered from his works.

Chaucer's career is divided into three periods, corresponding to the influences that determined the character of his poetry. During the first, or French period, he translated, imitated, and experimented with the models of French poetry prevalent in England during his early years. The best poem of this period is *The Dethe of Blaunche the Duchesse*, written in memory of the wife of his patron, John of Gaunt. There is much grace and tenderness in the poem, but it is of the conventional dream type and wholly imitative in character. To this period belong *The Compleynte unto Pite*, a pretty love-poem; *Chaucer's A, B, C*, a prayer to the Virgin, translated from the French; and "ballads, roundels, and virelays" in the dainty troubadour style, which he wrote in great numbers, it would seem, for with these "dities and songes glade," Gower says, "the land fulfild is overal."

French Period

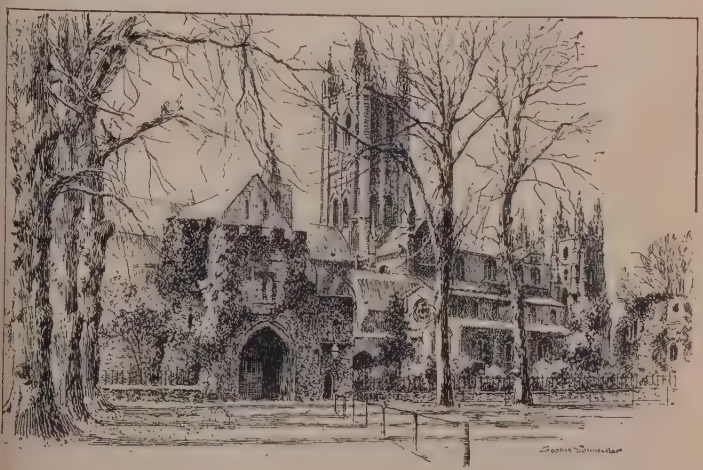
The longest work of this period was the *Romaunt of the Rose*, a translation of the French *Roman de la Rose*, the most popular work of its kind in the Middle Ages. It is a vast love allegory, graceful and interesting in places, but intolerably tedious to modern tastes. The rose, for which the hero is searching, typifies the lady whose favors he would win. He has endless adventures with such characters as Hate, Envy, Jealousy, Reason, Idleness, a bachelor named Sweet Looking, and other bloodless abstractions. The mediæval imagination, nourished upon religious symbolism, delighted to employ this fantastic method of describing the passions. The poem is written in the octo-syllabic

The Typical Mediæval Love-Story

couplet, the form perfected by Milton in *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*. Only one original text survives, and it is yet an unsettled question of Chaucerian scholarship whether this represents in part or in whole Chaucer's version of the poem.

The second, or Italian, period dates from Chaucer's visit to Italy in 1372. It is pleasant to think of the sudden expansion of this Englishman's poet soul, which had hitherto been constrained within the limits of French allegories and love-ditties, when he came in contact with the works of Petrarch, Boccaccio, and Dante upon their native soil; when he first felt the inspiring charm of the art and splendor of Italian cities, and the glory of Italian skies.

Italian Period



CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL

From this time Chaucer's works become broader, richer, more original, and more artistic. It was an intellectual awakening of profound importance to his poetic development.

The most important poem of this period is *Troilus and*

Criseyde, based upon Boccaccio's *Il Philostrato*. Only about a third of the poem is taken from Boccaccio, and the material is so used as to produce an essentially new and original work, superior to the model, and establishing an entirely new standard of romantic poetry in English. It is the story of the love of a Trojan hero, Troilus, for the fair and fickle Cressida, who finally deserts him for Diomedes among the Greeks. Chaucer here breaks away from artificiality and depicts with strong realism and dramatic force living characters, influenced by genuine passions. There is variety of incident, a mixture of comic and serious, analysis of passion and emotion, natural development of character, and a well-rounded plot, all foreshadowing the modern romantic novel.

Troilus and Criseyde

To this period belong *The Hous of Fame* and *The Legende of Good Women*, both unfinished poems. In the first there are evidences of the influence of Dante. In a vision the poet visits the Palace of Fame, where he finds crowds of people, great and small, begging the goddess Fame for her favors. From this poem Pope borrowed the plan and much of the substance of his *Temple of Fame*. *The Legende of Good Women* recites the stories of women who were famous examples of constancy in love, "far renowned brides of ancient song." Its merits are evidenced by its effect upon Tennyson, whose beautiful poem, *A Dream of Fair Women*, was inspired by it. The poem was written about 1385 and shows the maturity of Chaucer's art and the full preparation for his crowning achievement, the *Canterbury Tales*, which it resembles in form. The theme is monotonous and the poet undoubtedly became impatient with it and abandoned it for the finer theme that was already taking possession of his mind.

Hous of Fame; Legende of Good Women

The most charming of Chaucer's shorter descriptive poems is the *Parlement of Foules*, written to celebrate the betrothal of Richard II and Anne of Bohemia. The birds assemble on St. Valentine's Day in a grand parliament to decide who shall

be the favored suitor of a beautiful female eagle. There is much fluttering and chattering among the branches, and speech-making by the dignified tercel eagle, the gentle "turtel," the humorous goose, the mocking sparhawk, and the foolish cuckoo. At last Nature, "the vicaire of the Almyghty Lord," who is presiding, cuts off the debate and decides that the eagle "herself shall have the electioun." The assembly disperses with general satisfaction, for each one is permitted to choose his "make," and according to custom, "as yeer by yere was alwey hir usance," they sing a rondel "at hir departynge"—

Parlement of Foules

To don to Nature honour and plesaunce.

Then with as pretty a rondel as ever troubadour sung the poem closes.

Chaucer's third, or English, period includes the work of the last fifteen years of his life, represented by the *Canterbury Tales*. In this period he becomes an original creative artist, working without constraint of foreign models. He still reverences the Italian masters and is not entirely forgetful of his first loves among the French, but his genius now lives and moves in a purely English atmosphere. The characteristic features of the three periods of Chaucer's artistic development are well summarized by Saintsbury: "The French division is not only very largely second-hand, but is full of obvious tentative experiments; the author is trying his hand, which, as yet, is an uncertain one, on meter, on language, on subject; and, though he often does well, he seldom shows the supremacy and self-confidence of mature genius. In the Italian period he has gained very much in these respects; we hear a voice we have not heard before and shall not hear again—the voice of an individual, if not yet a consummate, poet. But his themes are borrowed; he embroiders rather than weaves. In the third or English period all this is over. 'Here is God's plenty,' as Dryden admirably said; and the poet is the

English Period

steward of the god of poets, and not merely the interpreter of some other poet. He has his own choice of subject, his own grasp of character, and his own diction and plot. He is at home."

Chaucer's purpose in the *Canterbury Tales* was to give a vivid and complete picture of contemporary English life, and although only a fraction of his scheme was completed, his purpose was accomplished with marvelous success. The plan was in itself a happy stroke of genius, to take the framework of his collection of stories from an English custom with which everybody was familiar. Annual pilgrimages were made to the shrine of the martyr Thomas-à-Becket at Canterbury, and the pilgrims traveled in companies for mutual protection as well as for sociability. Such a company Chaucer gathers at the Tabard Inn, in Southwark, at the south end of old London Bridge, the usual starting-point. He includes a typical representative of each class and occupation in society, the nobility, the clergy, the merchants, lawyers, doctors, students, farmers, and the rest. There are "nine and twenty" in the company; the poet and two who join the party on the road make thirty-two. The jolly host of the Tabard accompanies the pilgrims and acts as master of ceremonies. He proposes that each one shall tell two tales on the way to Canterbury and two more on the return, the most successful story-teller to have a free dinner at the Tabard at the end of the pilgrimage.

Plan of the Canterbury Tales

According to the plan, there should be one hundred and twenty-eight tales, but only twenty-four were written. The scheme was too vast for accomplishment, even had the poet's life been prolonged. Stories already written, as well as new ones, were included in the series; *The Knightes Tale*, for example, belongs to the Italian period of his work. Each pilgrim is described in the *Prologue*, and then each one tells a tale that is in harmony with his character. The tales are bound together by interludes of comment and discussion called forth by the Host's entertaining banter. The plot is full of life and action and

each actor unfolds his own character with strong dramatic force. Had Chaucer lived two centuries later, he probably would have written plays.

The most famous and masterly portion of the *Canterbury Tales* is the *Prologue*, which for its realistic pictures of human character stands unrivaled in our literature. With exquisite appropriateness the opening lines contain a description of spring with its April showers sifted through sunshine and bringing renewed gladness to the earth. Then the procession of pilgrims passes, each a living person to the eye of the reader. Properly the Knight leads, the finest product of chivalry, perfect model of "trouthe and honour, fredom and curteisie." With him is a gay young Squire, "fresh as is the monthe of May." Then comes the thrifty Yeoman, who is a master of wooderaft and carries in his hand a "myghty bowe" and "armes bright and kene." It was such as he that won the victories of Cressy and Poitiers. Next is the "symple and coy" Prioress, who affects the fashionable manners of great people, is very dainty in her table manners, and speaks French "ful faire and fetisly[1]," but, alack! it is only French "after the scole of Stratford-atte-Bowe."

The Prologue

There are many representatives of the church in the company, showing the large place occupied by religion in the life of the time. The monk is gently satirized, as one who ignores the strict rules of St. Benedict and keeps "many a deyntie hors in stable," whose silver bridles jingle, when he rides, "as loude as doth the chapel belle." The Friar is a plausible rogue who knows "the tavernes well in all the toun" and pretends to have "power of confessioun" superior to that of the curate, and gives easy penance wherever "he wiste[2] to have a good pitaunce[3]." There is also a Pardoner who sings love-songs, drives a good trade in sham relics, and carries in his lap a wallet "bret-ful of pardons, come from Rome all hoot." As a contrast, the ideal churchman appears

Church Characters

[1] neatly [2] knew [3] a good dinner, present

CHAUCER'S CANTERBURY PILGRIMS

in the poor Parson, who is rich "of holy thought and werk" and who never leaves his sheep "encombred in the myre" to run after the "pompe and reverence" of the fashionable world—

> But Christes lore and his apostles twelve
> He taughte, but first he folwede it hymselve.

This beautiful portrait of the country parson has been imitated by Goldsmith and many others, but never equaled. The Miller and the Reeve are coarse, vulgar fellows, whose faces and manners are in keeping with their characters. A worthy companion for these is the Wife of Bath, "gat-toothed" and "som-del [1] deef," who can boast of five husbands and three pilgrimages to Jerusalem. And well to the front is the bustling Sergeant of Law, who knows all the law cases "from the tyme of Kyng William," and who knows also the modern trick of appearing to do a rushing business—

> Nowher so bisy a man as he ther nas,[2]
> And yet he semed[3] bisier than he was.

[1] somewhat [2] was not [3] seemed

CHAUCER'S CANTERBURY PILGRIMS

The portrait of the Student of Oxford is drawn with delicate and sympathetic touches. His horse is "lene as is a rake" and his clothes are threadbare, but he would rather have —

> Twenty bookes clad in blak or reed
> Of Aristotle and his philosophie,
> Than robes riche, or fithele,[1] or gay sautrie.[2]

The prosperous and well-fed Franklin and the Merchant with his imported "Flaundrysh bever hat" represent the material prosperity of the middle classes. The Doctor of Physic is a "verray parfit practisour" and knows all the medical authorities from Æsculapius to Gilbertin, but —

> His studie was but litel on the Bible.

And so the incongruous jolly company goes galloping by, laughing, joking, telling their tales and unconsciously revealing the whole life and character of the English people. To unfold more of their personalities here would be a wrong to the student, who in his first reading should have the delight of unimpaired freshness.

[1] fiddle [2] psaltery, harp

In form and substance the tales are an epitome of the literature of the period, each literary type being transformed and perfected by the magic of genius. *The Knightes Tale*, the best-known and, artistically, the most finished of all the tales, is a romance, in which the story of two brothers in love with the same woman is told with every possible variation of the theme between the extremes of humor and tragedy. The story is Greek and is borrowed from Boccaccio, but it is put into a Gothic setting, and upon it Chaucer lavished his art in painting the decaying glories of chivalry. The tearful tales of Patient Griselda and the faithful Custance represent the method of the didactic and religious story-tellers in putting the whole emphasis on a single virtue by personification. The Second Nun's tale, the *Life of St. Cecile*, and the Prioress's tale of little St. Hugh stand for the popular legends of the saints.

Chaucer's Use of Current Literary Types

The stories told by the Miller, the Reeve, the Shipman, the Summoner, and the Merchant represent the *fableau*, a form of story presenting ordinary life, usually with broad farce, adapted to the coarser tastes of the common people. Another popular species, the animal epic, is represented by the Nun's Priest's exquisite story of the Cock and the Fox. In the clever burlesque of the *Rhyme of Sir Topas*, Chaucer passes judgment upon the monotonous and jingling tales of knightly adventure then in vogue.

Fableaux

Chaucer's own story is a long and tedious "moral tale vertuous" in prose, and the Parson's tale, with which the series concludes, is a prose sermon on repentance and the seven deadly sins, dull enough to satisfy any churchman of the period. Chaucer aided the growth of prose by two other works, a *Treatise on the Astrolabe*, written for the instruction of his "little son Lewis," and a translation of Boethius's *De Consolatione Philosophiæ*, a book popular for a thousand years throughout Europe, which was

Prose Works

put into English before Chaucer by King Alfred, and after him by Queen Elizabeth.

Chaucer invented the modern art of story-telling in verse, and in this supreme art of literary entertainment no one has ever surpassed him. His work is epic in form, with an instinctive tendency to dramatic expression. There is no lyric self-expression, no personal passion; the few lyrics that survive are imitations, interesting chiefly for their technical perfection. Everywhere there is dramatic life, movement, objective reality, the unfolding of living character as upon a stage. The *Prologue* and the interludes that connect the tales are remarkable for this direct and vivid treatment. Even in pure narrative, he frequently uses dialogue with strong dramatic effect.

Dramatic Element

Next to this dramatic element, one is impressed by the variety of his work, in range of themes, choice of forms, and use of material. He seemed to know all life, and to delight in inventing new ways of expressing its manifold phases. Moreover his clearness of vision and sanity of judgment are everywhere apparent. "He is a perpetual fountain of good sense," says Dryden. To be sure he often makes a curious jumble of classic and mediæval life, but for the mediæval mind this was perfectly normal, and for us it adds a quaint picturesqueness. He studied character as no poet before him had done, observed human nature minutely, pictured it to the life, and thus became our first great realist in literature. This fidelity to truth led him to include stories that are repugnant to the taste of to-day; but his own apology is frank and reasonable, and leaves no doubt about his own taste. His plan required that each personage on his stage should speak in character, and the coarse and bibulous Miller could tell no other than a coarse and vulgar story and be true to himself. The inclusion of these humorous tales of low life was an artistic necessity, as Chaucer conceived it, if he would not "telle his tale untrewe."

Variety

Realism

Chaucer's style is supremely that of simplicity and naturalness; yet his simplicity is never that of the commonplace. He was an artist, concealing his art with marvelous deftness. The masterly perfection of his style is the more wonderful when compared with the notions of style that prevailed among his predecessors. The long and loose-jointed narrative and monotonous meter of the mediæval romance he avoided entirely, and he gave to his tales unity, brevity, and artistic completeness. Moreover, beneath the mellow grace of his smooth-flowing narrative we feel the poet's own delight in every detail of the story, a sense of indefinable but joyous personality. "His best tales," says Lowell, "run on like one of our inland rivers, sometimes hastening a little and turning upon themselves in eddies that dimple without retarding the current; sometimes loitering smoothly, while here and there a quiet thought, a tender feeling, a pleasant image, a golden-hearted verse, opens quietly as a water-lily, to float on the surface without breaking it into ripple."

Chaucer's Style

This perfection of movement is due in large measure to Chaucer's artistic use of the simple English speech. Of the three dialects, Northern, Midland, and Southern, into which English was divided in his time, he chose the Midland to which to commit for all time the record of his genius; and the influence of his poetry and that of Wyclif's *Bible* were the main forces in determining the permanent form of the language. As has been said, "He found English a dialect and left it a language." To this rude and inflexible speech he brought much of the grace and smoothness of the French, and yet there are fewer French words in his vocabulary than in that of Langland. "There is no other author in our tongue," says Lounsbury, "who has clung so closely and so persistently to the language of common life."

Chaucer's Language

His love of the technique of his art is shown by his wide experiments in versification. His contribution to English prosody is greater than that of any other poet. He invented the heroic

couplet, consisting of two rhymed iambic pentameter lines, and established it as the most useful and influential verse form, except blank verse, known to English poetry. He complained that it was to him "a great penaunce" that English was so poor in rhyme words in comparison with French. Nevertheless, he performed wonderful feats of rhyming, as in the *Envoy* to *The Clerkes Tale*, where only three rhymes are used for thirty-six verses. He was a master of the music of verse, and if any passage in his poetry appears to be crude and unmusical, it is probable that the text is corrupt or the ear of the reader is unskilled. The difficulties presented by Chaucer's language and meter are apparent rather than real; they may be easily conquered by close attention to a few simple rules and verbal aids that every accommodating editor now furnishes. No one can know Chaucer or enjoy the richness of his poetry by reading "modernized" versions. To translate his poems, as was thought necessary in the eighteenth century, would now be a kind of disrespect for the sanctities of poetry.

A Master of Technique

The most prominent and most fascinating of Chaucer's qualities is his humor, spontaneous, irrepressible, all-pervading. It is fundamental to his nature, a part of the breath of his life. He is a laughing philosopher, always aware of the two-sided character of life, the serious and the ludicrous, the grave and the gay, in close conjunction; but there is no scorn or bitterness in his voice, only a penetrating and tolerant sympathy. His satire is keen and clear, but never harsh; even in his worst sinners he finds some redeeming grace. He says his severest things with a merry twinkle in the eye. His humor is gentle, genial, and tender; it is wit dissolved in sunshine. "Into the stolid English nature," says Lounsbury, "which may be earnest, but evinces an almost irresistible inclination toward heaviness, he wrought a lightness, a grace, a delicacy of fancy, a refined sportiveness even upon the most unrefined themes, which had never been known before

Chaucer's Humor

save on the most infinitesimal scale, and has not been known too much since."

Chaucer stood upon the division line between the Middle Ages and modern times. The sunset glories of chivalry he painted with a loving hand; his poetic reveries inclined toward the past, but his awakened intellectual impulses were away from mediæval mysticism, allegory, and monasticism toward the more practical realities of modern life. He had caught the spirit of that transforming force called the Renaissance that was just beginning to spread through Europe from Italy. In Longfellow's phrase, he was "the poet of the dawn," the dawn not only of a new era of poetry, but a new era of thinking and living. It was, however, to the creative poetic impulses of his race that he made his supreme contribution. Occleve called him "master dere and fader reverent," and this he has continued to be to all subsequent poets. Hardly a poet of any considerable merit from Occleve to Tennyson has failed to acknowledge his indebtedness to Chaucer. As a quickening and inspiring force to poets and lovers of poetry for five centuries he has been, indeed, "the morning star of song."

Chaucer's Influence

The chief distinction of John Gower, perhaps, is that he was the friend of Chaucer and has always been associated with him in literary history. Chaucer made him his legal representative during his absence in Italy and dedicated to him his *Troilus and Criseyde*. Through the uncritical fifteenth century, Gower and Chaucer were regarded as of about equal merit, but in the Elizabethan age the proper discrimination began to appear, as shown by Michael Drayton's quaint comparison of the two poets:—

John Gower, c. 1325–1408

> Honest Gower, who in respect of him
> Had only sipped at Aganippe's brim.

The difference between Chaucer and Gower is the difference

between the dashing brilliancy of genius and the plodding respectability of talent. Gower worked laboriously and devotedly in the cause of the Muses and achieved, at best, only a kind of poetical respectability. He wrote three huge poems, *Speculum Meditantis* in French, dealing with the virtues and vices of men, and presenting incidentally vivid pictures of the social conditions of London; *Vox Clamantis* in Latin, a criticism of political and social conditions in which the Peasants' War of 1381 is described; and *Confessio Amantis* in English, a series of tales woven together somewhat in the manner of the *Canterbury Tales*. There are more than a hundred stories, all serving to illustrate the Lover's experiences in the service of the goddess of love, written in fluent verse and occasionally exhibiting the gift of the true story-teller. Some of these tales are still readable and all are interesting as an expression of the culture and taste of the period, for Gower was an aristocrat in his verse and a glass of fashion for his days. But his fame has shrunk to the limits of a paragraph, and in strict justice this is all that can be done for him.

PROGRAM OF WORK

CLASS READING. Selections from *Piers Plowman* (Ward, P. and S., Bronson, Manly, Morris); selections from Mandeville's *Travels* and Wyclif's *Bible* (Maynard's Eng. Classics, Manly, Morris, Craik).

CHAUCER: *Prologue, Knightes Tale, Nonne Prestes Tale; Boke of the Duchesse*, 291–343, 448–485 (Ward); *Prologue* to *Legende of Goode Women*, 29–96 (Ward); *Compleynt of Chaucer to his Purse; Good Counseil of Chaucer* (Ward).

ANNOTATED TEXTS. *Prologue, Knightes Tale, Nonne Prestes Tale* (Clarendon Press, Riv. Lit. Series, Maynard's Eng. Classics, Pocket Classics); *Piers Plowman* (Cl. Press); Mandeville and Wyclif (Maynard's Eng. Classics).

The most satisfying complete edition of Chaucer is Pollard's Globe *Chaucer*, with Introduction and Glossary. Excellent also is Skeat's Oxford *Chaucer*.

BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM. Ward's *Chaucer* (English Men of Letters); Lounsbury's *Studies in Chaucer;* Pollard's *Chaucer Primer;* Tuckwell's *Chaucer;* Lowell's *My Study Windows;* Mackail's *Springs of Helicon;* Kittredge's *Chaucer and His Poetry;* Root's *The Poetry of Chaucer;* Legouis's *Chaucer.*

LITERARY HISTORY. Cambridge History, vol. II, ch. ii (Wyclif), ch. iii (Mandeville), ch. vii (Chaucer); Jusserand; Ten Brink; Taine; Courthope; Jusserand's *Piers Plowman;* Snell's *Age of Chaucer;* Coulton's *Chaucer and His England;* Jenks's *In the Days of Chaucer;* Schofield's *Chivalry in English Literature;* Morley's *English Writers,* vols. IV, V.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND. Green's *Short History,* ch. v; Traill; Gardiner; Sergeant's *Wyclif* (Heroes of the Nations); Trevelyan's *England in the Age of Wyclif.*

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION AND RESEARCH

1. Historic outline of the reign of Edward III. 2. Changes in methods of living. 3. Condition of the church.

4. Plan and purpose of *Piers Plowman.* 5. Features of the poem showing that it was intended for the common people. 6. Wyclif's personal character. 7. The beginning of English Protestantism. 8. Compare Wyclif's translation of the Bible with the latest revised version. 9. Account for the popularity of Mandeville's *Travels.*

10. Collect the evidence of a meeting between Chaucer and Petrarch in Italy. 11. Was Chaucer a poet laureate? 12. Characterize Chaucer's three literary periods. 13. Explain the dream device for constructing poems.

14. Purpose and plan of the *Canterbury Tales.* 15. Compare Chaucer's treatment of church characters with Langland's. 16. Illustrate Chaucer's love of nature, love of books, kindliness of spirit. 17. Typical examples of his humor; of his satire. 18. Discuss Chaucer's realism, and his apology for its occasional vulgarity.

19. Mention modern story-tellers in verse who have been influenced by Chaucer. 20. Compare Dryden's "translations" of Chaucer; Wordsworth's; Percy Mackaye's. 21. The three English dialects (Consult Champneys, chs. xvi, xviii; Lounsbury, ch. vi; Cambridge History, vol. I, 451–454).

CHAPTER IV

THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

The fifteenth century is generally regarded as a desert waste in the annals of English literature. The voices of genius were silent. For more than a hundred years not a single author of distinguished original power appeared. The nation was exhausted by the disastrous war with France and by the civil Wars of the Roses, in which feudalism was destroyed in England and the great families of the nobility were almost exterminated. It was a period of transition, a century of decline and of regeneration. The forces and ideals of the mediæval world were crumbling away, and beneath the ruins new forces were working at the foundations of the modern world; it was the quiet preparation for the great Renaissance that was to fill the next century. But in the literary desert there were here and there charming oases, bright spots of color with the promise of flowing springs and sweet flowers.

An Unproductive Century

During this barren period Chaucer's poetry was the main literary influence, and many imitators appeared who were happy in thinking themselves the equals of their master. To these aspiring poets Chaucer was, in Dunbar's phrase, the "rose of rethoris all"; that is, he was their chief rhetorician, or teacher. But about equally they praised the "sugarit lippis and tonges aureate" of Gower and Lydgate. As is usual in periods of decay, faults were repeated and exaggerated as much as merits were imitated.

Chaucer's Successors

So we find a prevailing confusion of meter and of grammatical construction, and grotesque affectations in diction, a straining for "mellifulate" words and "aureate" phrases that were accepted by the bad taste of the period as evidences of genius.

Most conspicuous among the English imitators of Chaucer were Lydgate and Occleve, or Hoccleve, both of whom deserve respect for the strenuous exercise of their good intentions.

John Lydgate, c. 1370–c. 1451

John Lydgate, a worthy monk of Bury St. Edmund's, wrote prodigiously, one hundred and forty thousand verses at least, and in almost every manner. His *Storie of Thebes* was written as an additional *Canterbury Tale*, in which he represents himself as joining the pilgrims on the homeward journey and telling the story. The *Troye Book*, a vast display of the Trojan War in fifteen thousand couplets, was composed to please Henry V. In the third book, the story of Troilus and Cressida is introduced, with a tribute of fervid admiration for Chaucer, his "Maister, Chaucier, chief poete of Britagne." The *Falls of Princes*, adapted from Boccaccio and suggested by Chaucer's *Monk's Tale*, depicts the "Tragedies of all such Princes as fell from theyr Estates throughe the Unstability of Fortune since the Creation of Adam"!

Lydgate uses the pentameter rhymed couplet of the *Canterbury Tales*, but his meter is as jolting as a corduroy road, and it is often difficult to determine whether a verse is intended to stand on four feet or five. Of this and other defects he is not entirely unaware, but pleads in excuse that his good master Chaucer would "not pynche nor grutche at every blot"; so why should we? He is most original and readable in his short, lively, satirical pieces, such as the *London Lickpenny*, which describes vividly and humorously the experiences of a countryman in the London streets, each stanza ending with the convincing refrain—

But for lack of mony I could not spede.

Thomas Occleve, inseparably linked with Lydgate, and if possible a poorer poet, has an imperishable claim upon our gratitude for the portrait of Chaucer with which he illuminated one page of his principal work *De Regimine Principum*. In the prologue to this poem occurs the celebrated passage mourning the loss of his "maister Chaucer, floure of eloquence, mirrour of fructurous entendement."

Thomas Occleve, c. 1365–

Here followeth the Interpretacion of the na
mes of gyldres and goddesses as rehersed
in this treatyse folowynge as Poetes wryte

A PAGE FROM THE ASSEMBLE OF GODDES BY JOHN LYDGATE

Printed about 1500. The woodcut was also used earlier in Caxton's second edition of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*.

A belated Chaucerian was Stephen Hawes, whose *Pastyme of Pleasure* is one of the last expressions of mediæval literary taste. He was a connecting link between Chaucer and Spenser, and his elaborate allegory, celebrating the vanishing glories of chivalry, undoubtedly furnished many hints

for the *Faerie Queene*. The poem is not without redeeming graces, passages of real originality, of tender, pensive beauty and old-world music; but for most readers it has shrunken to a single famous couplet, which stands forth "solitary in its splendor." The hero, Grand Amour, who has conquered many foes in many glorious adventures, is brought at last to the end of earthly happiness by death:—

Stephen Hawes, c. 1483–c. 1523

> For though the daye be never so longe,
> At last the belles ringeth to evensonge.

The best poetry of the century was produced in Scotland, where by the accident of a romantic adventure a Chaucerian school was established. The chief poets of this school are James I, Henryson, Gawain Douglas, and Dunbar. All were ardent admirers and students of the great English master. They copied the forms of his poems, reproduced passages in imitation, borrowed his characters, and even mixed his Midland diction with Scotch dialect, making a mongrel speech existing nowhere outside their poetry. Yet these poets were more than mere imitators; as disciples they surpassed the English imitators in true appreciation of Chaucer, and there is originality and poetic inspiration enough in their work to justify the pride of Scotchmen in their "Golden Age" of poetry. Scottish literature had begun with Barbour's *Bruce* and Blind Harry's *Wallace*, epics written in the latter part of the fourteenth century. But the Chaucerian impulse brought forth a new and finer poetic product from the heathered hills.

The Scotch School of Chaucer

The young prince who became James I, was captured when eleven years old in 1405, by the English and confined for nineteen years in Windsor Castle and other prisons. During this exile he solaced himself with the study of philosophy and literature, especially the works of Chaucer. From his prison tower—probably at Windsor—he one day saw in the yard below

a beautiful woman, Lady Jane Beaufort, and was smitten with love, just as in *The Knightes Tale* Palamon and Arcite discovered the fair Emelye among the dew-sprent flowers beneath their prison walls. In 1424 the young king returned to Scotland with the Lady Jane as his queen. This pretty story is told by James in *The King's Quair*, or King's Book, a most charming love-allegory, written in the manner of Chaucer's early poetry and pervaded by the master's spirit. It is graceful and tender in its music and bright with the fresh colors of youth and love. Beneath its artificialities one feels the presence of a happy and noble personality.

James I, 1394–1437

Robert Henryson boldly produced a sequel to *Troilus and Criseyde*, calling it *The Testament of Cresseid*. But better as poetry are his *Morall Fabillis*, in which he retells the stories of Æsop with lively imagination and humor. A real love of nature pervades his poems, and his excellent *Robene and Makyne* has the distinction of being the earliest English pastoral. Gawain Douglas continued the Chaucer tradition in the *Palice of Honour*, in which are gathered, in the usual allegorical setting, the wise and great of all time, Aristotle, Ovid, Virgil, Chaucer, and a host more, all in the service of Venus and "Queen Sapience." Only the virtuous are admitted to the palace. Catiline trying to sneak in through a window is hit with a book by Cicero. But Douglas's main hold upon fame is through his translation of the *Æneid*, the first rendering of an ancient classic into English.

Robert Henryson, c. 1425–1500

Gawain Douglas, 1474–1522

The most original of these poets was William Dunbar, sometimes called "the Scottish Chaucer." His poetry has a wide range, from allegories of the old dream type with May morning and singing birds, like *The Golden Targe* and *The Thistle and the Rose*, to boisterous and satirical songs, like *The Dance of the Seven Deadly Sins*. His work is alive with the Celtic vivacity, and in his broad humor, coarse and grotesque realism, and keen

William Dunbar, c. 1460–c. 1530

satire, as well as in touches of pathos and tenderness, he anticipates Burns, who might have acknowledged him as his "master dear and reverent," so close is their poetic kinship. A sample of Dunbar's more gracious moods will show what may be found in these obscure northern poets. This little song Sidney Lanier thought to be "without any rival in the English language for sweet music and fluent tenderness":—

Twa gentil birdis sat on ane[1] tree,
Twa bonnie birdis as e'er could be,
And as thay sat for ay thay sang,
Quhyl[2] wuddis and rochis[3] wi' echois rang:
"Com hither, com hither, mi bonnie dow,[4]
Wi honeyit halse[5] and dew-dabbit mow!"[6]
And ay the ane sang to the ither:
"Com hither, but nae delay, com hither,
Com hither, com hither, and let us woo."

The sun rase hie in the purpour[7] east,
And flichterit[8] down in the gleemie west,
And nicht cam on befair thay 're dune
In singand[9] of this gentle crune:[10]
"Com hither, com hither," etc.

Syne gaed thir[11] birdis swa traist[12] and free
Be nichtfal to their herbourie;[13]
In suth to say, their hearts were licht,
Sithens[14] thay sang thorow the nicht:
"Com hither, com hither," etc.

Another belated Scotch Chaucerian was Sir David Lyndsay, who prolonged the mediæval types of verse—the dream, allegory, and romance—well into the new century. He was a political and religious reformer; a kind of boisterous and unsanctified Scotch Wyclif; a prolific versifier, powerful in bold satire and coarse humor, and very popular. His most scorching satire was a *Pleasant Satyre of the Three Estaitis*, a morality play of much

Sir David Lyndsay, c. 1490–1555

[1] one [2] while [3] woods and rocks [4] dove [5] honeyed neck
[6] mouth [7] purple [8] fluttered, quivered [9] singing [10] croon, soft song
[11] then went these [12] so trustful [13] harbor, shelter [14] since

merit. His language is the Lowland Scotch, and therefore interesting as a form of English, but only the vigorous Scotch patriot can read and relish his poetry.

One of the most fascinating forms of literature is balladry, the people's poetry. Shakespeare's Autolycus was right when he said that the people "love a ballad but even too well; if it be doleful matter, merrily set down, or a very pleasant thing indeed, and sung lamentably." A people always has its folk-songs and ballads in the earlier periods of culture, but it is difficult to trace them before the age of printing. "Rimes of Robin Hood" are mentioned in *Piers Plowman*, and they had then been known probably for more than a hundred years. The natural growth of English ballads reached its culmination in the fifteenth century, when they began to assume literary form and the printing-press began to give permanency to their form. To this period are generally assigned the most famous of the ballads.

Ballads

A ballad springs into being, no one knows where or when, without the aid of any known author, is sung by the crooning nurse at the fireside and the piper at ale-house doors and May-day festivals, and is passed down by oral tradition from generation to generation. It is the voice of the masses of common folk, simple and direct in expression, and dealing only with the primitive and universal passions of human nature. In literary form it belongs to the epic species of poetry, for the true ballad always tells a story; and it is composed for singing. The verse is crude, but generally musical. The regular ballad stanza is a quatrain of alternating verses of four and three measures, with the second and fourth verses rhymed. Here, for example, is a typical ballad stanza:—

Characteristics of the Ballad

There lived a wife at Usher's Well,
And a wealthy wife was she;
She had three stout and stalwart sons,
And sent them o'er the sea.

Repetitions, interjections, and refrain characterize the oldest ballads, which were often so formed as to be suitable for accompanying the dance. Such poetry belongs to nature rather than to art. The poets of modern times have never been able to counterfeit successfully the rude force and charming simplicity of the old ballads.

Varieties of Ballads

The material of balladry is mainly historical, romantic, supernatural, and domestic. The finest of the historical type are ringing songs of the fierce border warfare of England and Scotland, as *Otterbourne* and the immortal *Chevy Chase*, the ballad by which the heart of Sir Philip Sidney was "moved more than with a trumpet."; and between myth and history is "the grand old ballad," as Coleridge called it, *Sir Patrick Spens*. This ballad is Scotch, as the most spirited ballads generally are, with Celtic magic in them. Romantic ballads are represented by *King Estmere* and *The Douglas Tragedy;* and often the polite romances were made over into popular ballads, as in *The Marriage of Sir Gawaine*. Supernaturalism was a favorite theme with the balladist, as in *The Wife of Usher's Well*. The domestic theme may be illustrated by *The Bailiff's Daughter of Islington*.

Robin Hood

The many Robin Hood ballads form a cycle by themselves. They are grouped about a semi-mythical hero, and constitute a kind of national epic embodying love of adventure and hatred of oppression. An acquaintance with Robin Hood and his companions is a part of the birthright of every youth with English blood in his veins. We all find an hour spent with "bold Robin Hood" and his lawless followers "under the green-wood tree" delightfully refreshing. One ballad stands out alone in its supreme excellence, *The Nut Browne Mayd*, an "exquisite love-duo," superior to any poem of a known writer in the fifteenth century. The dialogue form is unusual and the verse structure is intricate and skillfully handled, as two stanzas will show. The lover tests the constancy of

the maid by pretending that he has committed a crime for which he is banished:

HE.—It standeth so; a dede is do
Whereof grete harme shall growe:
My destiny is for to dy
A shamefull deth, I trowe;
Or elles to flee: the one must be.
None other way I knowe,
But to withdrawe as an outlawe,
And take me to my bowe.
Wherfore adue, my owne hart trewe!
None other rede I can;
For I must to the grene wode go,
Alone, a banyshed man.

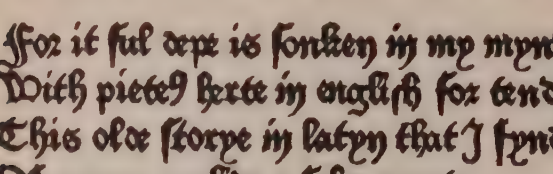
SHE.—O Lord, what is thys worldys blysse,
That chongeth as the mone!
My somer's day in lusty May
Is derked before the none.
I here you say, Farewell: Nay, nay,
We depart nat so sone.
Why say ye so? wheder wyll ye go?
Alas! what have ye done?
All my welfare to sorrowe and care
Sholde chaunge, yf ye were gone;
For, in my mynde, of all mankynde
I love but you alone.

The invention of printing marks the beginning of a new era of civilization. Literature became at once a vast educational force when a thousand books could be made and distributed in less time than it cost the ancient copyist to make one in the scriptorium of his monastery. England was behind the other countries of Europe in grasping this new instrument of progress. From about 1450 books were printed in Germany, and in eight other countries printing presses were at work when in 1476 William Caxton set up his press in Westminster, within the precincts of the Abbey. He learned his trade in Bruges, where he issued, about 1475, the first book printed in the English lan-

Caxton and his Printing Press

guage, the *Recuyell of the Histories of Troy*, which he had himself translated from the French. In 1477 appeared *Dictes and Sayings of the Philosophers*, the first book printed in England.

Caxton was more than a printer; in his translations and prefaces he shows a discriminating taste and an ardent desire to



For it ful depe is sonken in my mynde
With pieteꝰ herte in english for tendyte
This olde storye in latyn that I fynde
Of quene anelida & fals arcyte
That elde that all can frete and byte
As it hath freten many anoble storye
Hath nyh deuouredꝫ out of my memorye

FROM CHAUCER'S ANELIDA AND ARCITE, PRINTED BY CAXTON ABOUT 1477

make literature current in the native tongue. His work was of incalculable value in giving permanent form to the language and in spreading culture through English speech, at a time when scholars were wedded to Latin. Among the earliest books of his press were Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, and Higden's *Polychronicon*.

But the book for which Caxton's name is held in strongest affection is Sir Thomas Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*, the one golden literary product of the fifteenth century. Of the author of this splendid prose epic little is known, except that he completed his book in 1469 and probably died in 1471, fourteen years before it was printed. Caxton edited the book and wrote a prologue containing an excellent description of the contents. He had some doubt about its worthiness because "divers men held

Malory's Morte d'Arthur, 1485

opinion that there was no such Arthur," but was reassured by the fact that "ye may see his sepulchre in the monastery of Glastonbury." So he decided to print the book "to the intent that noble men may see and learn the noble acts of chivalry, the gentle and virtuous deeds that some knights used in those days, by which they came to honor, and how they that were vicious were punished and put oft to shame and rebuke."

Literary Qualities of the Book

Malory gathered all the scattered material of mediæval romance, in both French and English, connected with Arthur and the Round Table, and wove it into a single narrative, a gorgeous tapestry unfolding the whole world of Arthurian myth and story in rich and fascinating colors. The action is often disconnected and inconsistent, but there is a kind of unity achieved by grouping the tales about the central theme of the search for the Holy Grail. The author had not the imagination to invent new tales, but he could translate the old tales with a poet's fine sense of beauty, blending chivalry with Christianity, and clothing worldly adventure with spiritual aspiration. His prose is simple, flowing, and vivid, and his imaginative narrative is full of vigorous action. Everywhere there is the glow of the writer's personal enthusiasm and a constant faith in what he describes. In the *Morte d'Arthur*, poets, painters, and composers have found many of their noblest themes—Tennyson, Swinburne, Arnold, Morris, Rossetti, Watts, Abbey, Burne-Jones, and Wagner; and in the fields of English art the highroads will always lead to Camelot. A passage must be quoted to illustrate the language and spirit of this old treasury of poet's lore. It is the lament of Sir Ector for Launcelot:—

Then went Sir Bors unto Sir Ector, and told him how there lay his brother, Sir Launcelot, dead; and then Sir Ector threw his shield, sword, and helm from him. And when he beheld Sir Launcelot's visage he fell down in a swoon. And when he awaked it were hard for any tongue to tell the doleful complaints that he made for his brother. "Ah, Launcelot," he said, "thou were head of all Christian knights, and now, I dare say," said Sir Ector, "thou Sir Launcelot, there thou liest,

¶ Here foloweth the syxth boke of the noble and worthy prynce kyng Arthur.

¶ How syr Launcelot and syr Lyonell departed fro the courte for to seke auentures / & how syr Lyonell lefte syr Launcelot slepynge & was taken. Capl'm.i.

None after that the noble & worthy kyng Arthur was comen fro Rome in to Englande / all the knyghtes of the rouͤde table resorted vnto ẏ kyng and made many iustes and turneymentes / & some there were that were good knyghtes / whiche encreased so in armes and worshyp that they passed all theyr felowes in prowesse & noble dedes & that was well proued on many. But in especyall it was proued on syr Launcelot du lake. For in all turneymentes and iustes and dedes of armes / bothe for lyfe and deth he passed all knyghtes & at no tyme he was neuer ouercomen but yf it were by treason or enchauntement. Syr Launcelot encreased so meruaylously in worshyp & honour / wherfore he is the first knyght ẏ the frensshe booke maketh mencyon of / after that kynge Arthur came from Rome / wherfore quene Guenuer had hym in grete fauour aboue all other knyghtes / and certaynly he loued the quene agayne aboue all other ladyes and damoyselles all the dayes of his lyfe / and for her he

A PAGE FROM MALORY'S MORTE D'ARTHUR, PRINTED ON CAXTON'S PRESS IN 1529

that thou were never matched of earthly knight's hand. And thou were the courtiest knight that ever bare shield. And thou were the truest friend to thy lover that ever bestrode horse. And thou were the truest lover of a sinful man that ever loved woman. And thou were the kindest man that ever strake with sword. And thou were the goodliest person that ever came among press of knights. And thou were the meekest man and the gentlest that ever ate in hall among ladies. And thou were the sternest knight to thy mortal foe that ever put spear in the rest." Then there was weeping and dolour out of measure.

The influence of the *Morte d'Arthur* upon the development of prose literature was supplemented by Lord Berners's translation, "out of Frenche into our maternalle Englyshe tonge," of Froissart's *Chronicles*, a work that competes in lively interest with Malory's romance and Mandeville's *Travels*. The pictures of great battles such as Crecy, Poitiers, and Otterburn described with the vividness of an eye-witness, the pageantry of court and camp, the thrilling contests in the tournaments, set forth in quaint and picturesque language, give to this book an abiding charm and interest. But it should be read, as Taine advises, "like a romance," as a description of manners rather than as a record of facts.

Froissart's Chronicles, 1525

At the very end of the century we come upon the singular figure of John Skelton, who claims the name of poet by virtue of mere poetical strenuosity. He represents many phases of the transition between the crude and crumbling mediævalism of the fifteenth century and the new spirit of literary and religious reform in the sixteenth century. He was a priest and tutor to the prince who was soon to be Henry VIII, loyal to the ancient church and hostile to the doctrines of Luther and that "devilysshe dogmatist" Wyclif; yet he satirized with a wild boldness, in *Colyn Clout* and *Why come ye nat to Courte*, the wealthy and corrupt clergy, and especially Cardinal Wolsey, as the chief author of the people's ills. He wrote voluminously, using a peculiar versification that has come to be known as "Skeltonical verse."

John Skelton, c. 1460–1529

His scurrying lines and ingenious successions of rhymes often run so rapidly as to lose the sense and become mere doggerel. But here and there among his clattering lines one finds pretty conceits, touches of quaint originality, and occasional passages of true lyrical feeling, as in *The Boke of Phyllyp Sparowe* and *The Garlande of Laurell*. He occasionally surpassed himself, as in these pretty lines in praise of Margaret:—

Stedfast of thought,
Wele made, wele wrought;
Far may be sought,
Erst that ye can fynde
So corteise, so kynde,
As mirry Margaret,
This mydsomer floure,
Jentyll as fawcoun
Or hawke of the towre.

Skelton's work is thoroughly English, a rude product of the Chaucerian school, untouched by the classical forces that were about to exert a transforming influence upon English poetry. Skelton had only heard of Petrarch as "a famous clark." The next English poets whom we shall meet were disciples of that inspired "clark" in far-away Italy.

PROGRAM OF WORK

CLASS READING. English Chaucerians: Lydgate's *London Lickpenny*, *The Golden Age* (Ward, Bronson); Occleve's *Tributes to Chaucer* (Ward); Hawes's *Character of a True Knight* (Ward); Skelton's *Mistress Margaret Hussey*, *Colyn Clout* (Ward).

Scottish Chaucerians: *King's Quair*, stanzas 30–54 (Ward, Bronson); Henryson's *Robene and Makyne* (Oxford Book of English Verse); Dunbar's *The Thistle and the Rose* (Ward); *Sanct Salvatour* and *The Golden Targe* (Bronson); *To a Lady* (Oxford).

Ballads: *Sir Patrick Spens; Edom o'Gordon; Chevy Chase* (*The Hunting of the Cheviot*); *The Douglas Tragedy; The Wife of Usher's Well; The Nut-Browne Mayd; The Bailiff's Daughter of Islington; Robin Hood and Maid Marion; Robin Hood Rescuing the Widow's Three Sons; Robin Hood's Death and Burial; The Wee, Wee Man; The Three Ravens; Sweet William's Ghost.*

The best collections of ballads are Child's *English and Scottish Popular Ballads* (one vol. ed.), Gummere's *Old English Ballads*,

Oxford *Book of Ballads*, Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*. There are good selections in the Pocket Classic Series, Maynard's, R. L. S., and Ward.

MORTE D'ARTHUR: Selections in Craik, Century Readings, Athenæum Press Series, R. L. S., Pocket Classics. Best complete editions are the Globe and the *Reproduction of the Original* (Nutt). Howard Pyle's *Stories of King Arthur* and Lanier's *Boys' King Arthur* are excellent. Froissart's *Chronicles* is included in Everyman's Library.

LITERARY HISTORY. Cambridge, vol. III; Snell's *Age of Transition;* Morley's *English Writers*, vols. VI and VII; Minto's *Characteristics of English Poets;* Jusserand's *Romance of a King's Life;* Lang's *Introduction to Ballads* (Ward); Gummere's *Old English Ballads* (Introduction); Henderson's *The Ballad in Literature;* Gummere's *The Popular Ballad.*

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND. Green's *Short History*, ch. vi, secs. 1–3; Green's *Town Life in the Fifteenth Century;* Denton's *England in the Fifteenth Century;* Gairdner's *Houses of Lancaster and York.*

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION AND RESEARCH

1. Extent, character, and result of the Wars of the Roses. 2. Effects upon literature.

3. Chaucer's successors in England and Scotland. 4. General character of this imitative poetry. 5. The story of James I from history. 6. Describe the versification of *The King's Quair*, known as "rhyme royal." 7. Rewrite five stanzas of the poem in modern language (Glossary in Bronson). 8. Compare the personal experiences in *The King's Quair* with the imaginary experiences in *The Knightes Tale.* 9. Love of nature in the Scottish poets.

10. Characteristics of the old ballads. 11. Who were the authors of the ballads? (Consult Gummere). 12. Distinguish the ballad from the song. 13. Explain the effect of repetition, and of the refrain or burden. 14. Select good illustrations of the use of the burden in ancient or modern ballads (Rossetti's *Sister Helen*, Kingsley's *Three Fishers*, for example). 15. Compare the ballad of *Chevy Chase* with the later version (Percy's *Reliques*). 16. Read Addison's essays on *Chevy Chase* (*Spectator*, nos. 70, 74).

17. Why are modern ballads generally inferior to the ancient? 18. Compare ballads of Goldsmith, Scott, Tennyson, Longfellow, Whittier with the old ballads. 19. Explain the peculiar charm of the *Morte d'Arthur.* 20. Trace some of Tennyson's borrowings from Malory in the *Idylls of the King.*

CHAPTER V

THE RENAISSANCE IN ENGLAND

The wide intellectual awakening that attended the breaking up of the mediæval world is known as the Renaissance, the rebirth of progressive civilization. New ways of thinking, new ideals and enthusiasms, appeared. There was a reaction against the dominant ignorance and superstition of the preceding "dark ages." To think independently of church doctrine had long been heresy and crime. Philosophy, dominated by theology, had become little more than a barren exercise of the intellect upon metaphysical subtleties and useless speculations. Learned schoolmen debated such questions as, "whether an angel can pass from one point to another without passing through the intermediate space." Bacon described this scholastic philosophy as "cobwebs of learning, admirable for the fineness of thread and work, but of no substance or profit," which were "spun out of no great quantity of matter and infinite agitation of wit." Petrarch called the universities "nests of gloomy ignorance."

Mediaeval Culture

The human mind now began to assert its freedom and individuality. The arid and fruitless learning of the schoolmen, as the mediæval scholars are called, gave place to problems in science and art of real human significance. The close and musty atmosphere of the monasteries was cleared away, and light and pure air were allowed to circulate in the halls of learning. The impulse was first felt in Italy, in the fourteenth century, where there was a rediscovery of the arts and phi-

losophy of Greece and ancient Rome. Italy was a favorable place for the beginning of such a movement, among neglected statues and crumbling temples, relics of a splendid past. When the Turks took possession of Constantinople, in 1453, many scholars fled to Italy, bringing with them the language and literature of classic Greece. Students, poets, and philosophers engaged with enthusiasm in the study of Greek and in the search for lost manuscripts. The splendid court of the Medicis was the center of the new intellectual interests, and Florence became a "modern Athens."

Rebirth of Classical Culture

In Italy, therefore, the Renaissance was the rebirth of Greek and Roman civilization. The mediæval church had taught men to renounce the world and their own humanity, and to regard heaven and the future life as the only worthy objects of contemplation and aspiration. The pagan sense of the beauty of the world and of the joy of life was regarded as a sinful and dangerous concession to the flesh. "Human existence had no meaning except as the prelude to heaven or hell." The students of the "new learning" protested against this view of life and presented in contrast the more liberal and gracious ideals found in the writings of the ancients. These strange and fascinating works they called *literæ humaniores*, the more human literature, the "humanities," as such studies came to be named; hence these reformers were known as humanists.

The Humanists

The Renaissance, as it spread throughout Europe, presents four elements that appeared partly as causes and partly as effects. First was the revival of classical learning and art in Italy and the splendid outburst of native genius in literature, sculpture, and painting, of which Petrarch, Michael Angelo, and Raphael are respectively the great representatives. Second was the invention of printing, which increased vastly the acquirement and circulation of knowledge. Third was the sudden and

Four Phases of the Awakening

marvelous widening of the world's horizon through the discoveries made just at the end of the fifteenth century. In 1486 Diaz discovered the Cape of Good Hope; in 1492 Columbus discovered the American continent; in 1497 the Cabots discovered North America; in 1498 Vasco da Gama rounded Africa and opened the way to India; and in 1500 Copernicus published his theory of the universe, which affected mediæval thinking like an earthquake shock. Fourth was the religious reformation, the appearance of an awakened and more liberal religious spirit. In England the Renaissance expressed itself strongly in two directions,—in the revival of learning and in religious reform, each of which contributed directly to the advancement of literature.

Toward the close of the fifteenth century young Englishmen began to visit Italy for study. Among the first of these seekers after the new learning were William Grocyn and Thomas Linacre, who returned to teach Greek at Oxford. Here a little band of scholars gathered for teaching and study, united in a common enthusiasm for the newly discovered riches of the ancient world. The real masterpieces of Greek and Latin now began to displace the theological treatises of the schoolmen in mediæval Latin. Contact with the original texts of the Greek classics and of the Scriptures revealed an undreamed-of world of truth and beauty. The Dutch humanist, Erasmus, the greatest Continental scholar of the period, was attracted to Oxford, and became intimately associated with John Colet and Sir Thomas More in the work of spreading the new culture. At the home of More, Erasmus wrote his *Praise of Folly*, a satirical pæan of triumph over the doomed forces of ignorance and superstition. His edition of the New Testament in the original Greek was one of the foundation-stones of the Reformation.

The Oxford Reformers

Colet was the leader of the Oxford humanists, and the most effective in applying the new learning to religious reform. In his lectures on St. Paul's Epistles he rejected the commentaries

and theological subtleties of the schoolmen, went back to the original language of the Scriptures, studied the personality of St. Paul and the times in which he lived, and thus was the first to employ the "historical method" in the interpretation of the Bible. In order that the new learning might be deeply and permanently rooted in English soil, in 1512 he established St. Paul's School, and engaged his friends Linacre and Erasmus to write improved text-books for the boys. For head-master he selected William Lily, the friend of More, eminent for his Greek learning and celebrated henceforth for his Latin Grammar, first written for this school.

John Colet, 1466-1519

The finest and most typical representative of the English Renaissance was Sir Thomas More, whose very name is a precious inheritance to every true Englishman. "What has nature ever created more gentle, more sweet, more happy than the genius of Thomas More?" wrote Erasmus. More was deeply interested in the Italian awakening, and translated into English a life of Pico della Mirandola, one of the leading Florentine humanists. His literary fame rests upon the *Utopia*, a unique book, which astonished all Europe with its audacious idealism, and which is still a world classic of living interest. It was written in Latin and first published on the Continent in 1516, and translated into German, French, and Italian before it appeared in English in 1551.

Sir Thomas More, 1478–1535

The *Utopia* describes an ideal commonwealth, presenting a picture of government and society as they should be in a truly Christian civilization. Though undoubtedly suggested by Plato's ideal Republic, the book is essentially an original creation, and has served as a model for scores of imitations. More was criticizing the social conditions in the age of Henry VIII, but many of his ideas are the current substance of the "socialism" and "progressive" politics of to-day. In his land of "nowhere" all men are free

More's Utopia

and equal; there are no wars of aggression, no monopolies, no excessive labor of a lower class to support an idle class, and no religious dissensions:—

> Any man mighte do the best he could to bring other to his opinion, so that he did it peaceablie, gentlie, quietly, and soberlie, without hastie and contentious rebuking and inveching against other. If he could not by faire and gentle speche induce them unto his opinion, yet he should use no kinde of violence, and refraine from displeasaunte and seditious woordes. To him that would vehemently and fervently in this cause strive and contende was decreed banishment or bondage.

This lesson on toleration was especially applicable to this age, in which the religious struggle was increasing in violence. Indeed, to the bitter spirit of intolerance More himself fell a martyr; he died the most distinguished victim of Henry's savage policy of reform.

The enthusiasm for classical literature naturally expressed itself in critical as well as creative impulses. Improvements of language and style began to receive serious attention. Thomas Wilson in his *Art of Rhetorique*, compiled from Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian, attempted to show that writing in English could be made an art by using the rules of the classic masters. But this admiration for the ancients led to excesses. Scorning the native tongue, scholars wrote in Latin, which they regarded as the only language suited to the dignity of learning and literature. Even Bacon distrusted English and committed his thoughts to Latin. The English vocabulary became highly Latinized, a process that gave to the language melody and richness, but deprived it of some of its native strength. The rivalry of Latin and Saxon is seen in the use of pairs of synonyms, as "acknowledge and confess," "assemble and meet together," "humble and lowly," in the Prayer Book.

Effect of Classic Learning on the Language

Roger Ascham was one of the few scholars who were wise enough to oppose this classical affectation in language, and to champion the honest English speech. "He that wyll wryte

well in any tóngue," he says, "muste folowe thys counceł of Aristotle, to speake as the common people do, to thinke as wise men do." In the dedication of his *Toxophilus* to the King, he says apologetically: "Althoughe to have written this boke either in Latin or Greke had bene more easier and fit for mi trade in study, yet nevertheless, I supposinge it no point of honestie, that mi commodite should stop and hinder ani parte either of the pleasure or profite of manie, have written this English matter

Roger Ascham, 1515–1568

AN EARLY VIEW OF ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL, LONDON

in the English tongue for English men." With this little treatise, *Toxophilus*, advocating the art of shooting with the bow, the development of the English essay may be said to begin. There were no models for such writing in the native literature, so Ascham used the form of the Socratic dialogue in Plato's works, the form used later by Walton in his *Complete Angler*, and by many others before the structure of the English essay had been determined.

Ascham is more celebrated as the author of *The Scholemaster*,

a pedagogical essay on the teaching of Latin, "but specially purposed for the private brynging up of youth in Jentlemen and Noblemens houses." Such a book ought to be dull, but instead it is engagingly interesting. In its theories of education it was astonishingly in advance of the times, anticipating even the best theories of to-day, and exhibiting a freshness and reasonableness of ideas that allied the author with the best of the humanists. Ascham was tutor to Elizabeth and Lady Jane Grey, and the passage in which he describes the latter's reading of Plato is a charming domestic sketch. Indeed the note of personality throughout the book is characteristic of the Renaissance literature; after a few pages the reader is in close and friendly touch with the old schoolmaster himself. Listen to his chiding of Cicero for having, in his letters to Atticus, spoken "overmeurtislie" of England, as an isle with neither silver nor learning:

Ascham's Schoolmaster, 1570

> Now master Cicero, blessed be God, and his sonne Jesus Christ, whom you never knew . . . blessed be God, I say, that sixten hundred yeare after you were dead and gone, it may trewly be sayd, that for silver, there is more cumlie plate in one Citie of England than is in foure of the proudest Cities in all Italie, and take Rome for one of them. And for learnyng, beside the knowledge of all learned tongs and liberall sciences, even your owne bookes, Cicero, be as well read, and your excellent eloquence is as well liked and loved, and as trewlie followed in England at this day, as it is now, or ever was, sence your owne tyme in any place of Italie.

During the turbulent struggle of politics and religion which we call the Reformation, much that was old and venerable was ruthlessly sacrificed to make way for the new. In the sweeping destruction of the monasteries, for example, millions of books and manuscripts, collected through centuries in the monastic libraries, were thrown to the winds and were used by bakers to heat their ovens. Noble leaders like More, Latimer, and Cranmer were rushed to martyrdom in the terrific strife. In

Losses and Gains from the Reformation

the attempt of Mary to crush the movement and to restore the old order, it seemed as if the finer life of all England must perish in the fires of religious conflict. But extensive and lamentable as were the losses, the gains were greater. Tradition and authority gave place to enterprise and originality. Thought was set free and the individual man discovered his own mind. Scholasticism, the unfruitful scholarship of the Middle Ages, lost forever its dignity and power. Out of the social and political chaos the people arose as a new force in the activities of the national life. As a means of increasing his personal power, Henry raised many of the commons to the ranks of the nobility; so a little later we hear Barnabe Googe, in his *Eclogs, Epytaphes and Sonnets*, complaining that "nobilitie begins to fade and carters up do springe." As nowhere else in Europe, the Reformation in England was a national movement, which left its impression on the whole life and character of the nation.

The inspiring source and chief instrument of the movement was the English Bible, the supreme literary monument of the Reformation. The influence of the newly discovered classic literature was confined to the learned class; the Bible became at once the literature of all classes. With wise forethought the translators chose for their version the simple and strong vernacular, instead of the Latinized vocabulary of literary fashion. "As a mere literary monument," says the historian Green, "the English version of the Bible remains the noblest example of the English tongue. Its perpetual use made it from the instant of its appearance the standard of our language." More than this, it transformed the national character. "The whole temper of the nation was changed. A new conception of life and of man superseded the old. A new moral and religious impulse spread through every class."

The English Bible

Wyclif's translation of the Bible had disappeared; only the Latin Vulgate was in use, a sealed book to all but scholars. In 1526 William Tyndale, an Oxford scholar, fired with reform-

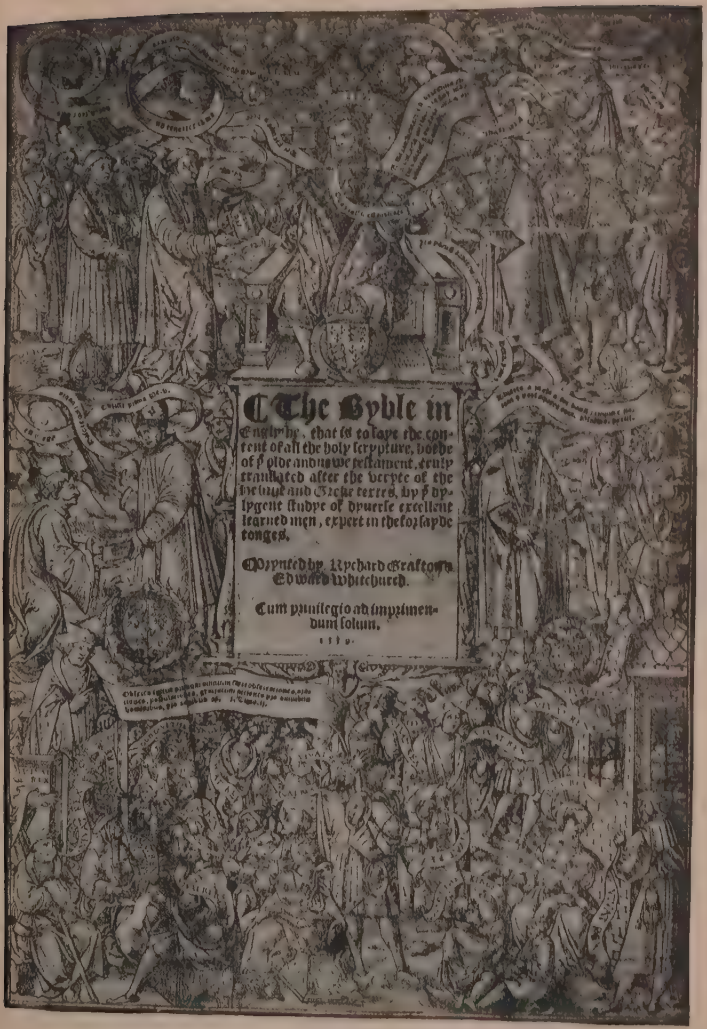
ing zeal by the news of Luther's revolt in Germany, brought forth the New Testament, translated directly from the original Greek. This work was printed on the Continent and secretly circulated in England, in spite of the king's decree that it be "brenned." About ten years later Miles Coverdale produced another version, adding the Old Testament, translated from the Hebrew. The second edition of this work, published in 1537, was the first Bible printed in England. It is a striking proof of the rapid advance of the reform sentiment that a third edition of this version, known as the "Great Bible," was by royal authority in 1539 established in all the churches. A copy of the huge book was sent to every parish church and chained to a reading-desk, where every one might freely read the Scriptures in his own every-day language. Six copies were placed in the nave of St. Paul's Cathedral, where "many well-disposed people used much to resort to the hearing thereof, especially when they could get any that had an audible voice to read to them. One John Porter used sometimes to be occupied in that goodly exercise, to the edifying of himself as well as others." In this gaping group about John Porter we have a picture of Protestantism in its foundations, the realization of the English ideal of religious liberty.

Tyndale and Coverdale's Bible

Next to the vernacular Bible in its influence upon English thought and expression was the Book of Common Prayer. The exalted spiritual tone of this noble service book and the majestic rhythm of its prose are generally credited to Thomas Cranmer, its chief compiler, who evidently had a remarkable appreciation of the melodic beauty and inherent power of the common English speech, as newly enriched by classical borrowings.

The Prayer-Book

Among the reform preachers of the period, the greatest was Hugh Latimer, who deserves a place in literary history for the strong and lively style of his *Sermons*, which still interest the reader with their humor, homely illustrations, and breezy ex-


¶ The Byble in
Englysshe, that is to saye the con-
tente of all the holy scripture, both
of ye olde and ye newe testament, truly
translated after the texte of the
Hebrue and Greke textes, by ye ex-
pert studye of diuerse excellent
learned men, expert in the
sayde
tonges.
¶ Prynted by Richard Grafton &
Edward Whitchurch.
Cum priuilegio ad imprimendum solum.
1539.

THE TITLE PAGE OF THE GREAT BIBLE, 1539

pressions. Zealous and fearless, with a voice ringing with denunciation like that of a Hebrew prophet, Latimer hurled at proud ministers of church and state rough Saxon words, hot with righteous wrath. To King Henry he said boldly: "Have pity on your soul, and think that the day is even at hand when you shall give an account of your office, and of the blood that hath been shed by your sword." The ring of his metal may be heard in a few sentences from the sermon on *The Ploughers:*—

Hugh Latimer, 1491–1555

> Now I would ask a strange question. Who is the most diligent bishop and prelate in all England, that passeth all the rest in doing his office? I can tell, for I know him, who it is, I know him well. But now I think I see you listing and hearkening, that I should name him. I will tell you. It is the Devil. He is the most diligent preacher of all other, he is never out of his diocese, he is never from his cure, ye shall never find him unoccupied, he is ever in his parish, he keepeth residence at all times, call for him when you will, he is ever at home, the diligentest preacher in all the realm, he is ever at his plough, ye shall never find him idle, I warrant you.

"In King Henry the Eighth's times sprung up a new company of courtly makers, of whom Sir Thomas Wyatt, the elder, and Henry Earl of Surrey were the two chieftains, who having traveled into Italy and there tasted the sweet and stately measures and style of the Italian poesie, greatly polished our rude and homely manner of vulgar poesie, from that it had been before." So wrote Puttenham in 1589 in his *Arte of English Poesie*, a judgment of the work of these reform poets that still stands. On the side of social refinement these "courtly makers" represent the fading ideals of chivalry. In the court circles of the period every gentleman was supposed to write poetry; Henry himself wrote songs and music. And these compositions were passed about in manuscript among the fine ladies and court exquisites; for fine gentlemen regarded it as beneath their dignity and somewhat vulgar to print their verses, unless anonymously, "as if it were a discredit," says the judicial Puttenham, "for a gentleman to seem

The "Courtly Makers"

learned and to shew himself amourous of any good art." As this was largely the poetry of personal compliment, it became highly artificial, so that it is often impossible to tell whether the poet is expressing real sentiment or merely the conventional sentiments of the ballroom.

But Wyatt and Surrey were more than "courtly makers." They did for literature what the Oxford humanists were doing for learning and religion; they gave to it the new creative impulse of the Italian Renaissance. Their study of the Italian masters, especially Petrarch, disclosed new problems of poetic art, and their experimental work—much of it the clumsy work of pioneers—created a fervent interest and raised the standard of all poetic endeavor. "Of our lyrical poetry they were the founders," says Churton Collins. "In their lyrics, indeed, is to be found the seed of everything that is most charming in the form of Jonson and Herrick, of Waller and Suckling, of Cowley and Prior." The subject of their song was generally love, treated in the artificial manner of fashionable compliment. They were the first of the English "amourists," who addressed their verses to some fanciful mistress in imitation of Petrarch's poetical courtship of Laura. Their particular glory in literary history is the introduction of the Italian sonnet, a difficult, artistic, and bewitching verse form that has been a favorite with English poets ever since. Wyatt's love-lyrics are better than his sonnets; they have a charm of direct expression that often reveals, apparently, genuine sentiment. Surrey is superior to Wyatt in workmanship, handling his meters with skill, and often with grace and dignity.

Sir Thomas Wyatt, 1503?–1542; Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, 1517?–1547

It is Surrey's special distinction to have introduced, in a translation of two books of Virgil, the use of blank verse. A few of his stiff lines, from the Laocoön episode, will exhibit the rude form in which this kind of verse, the "omnipotent instrument of Shakespeare and Milton," first appeared:—

Blank Verse

But they with gate direct to Lacon ran,
And first of all eche serpent doth enwrap
The bodies small of his two tender sonnes;
Whoes wretched limmes they byt, and fed theron.
Then saught they hym, who had his weapon caught
To rescue them, twise winding him about,
With folded knottes and circled tailes, his wast.

Wyatt and Surrey were too aristocratic to publish what they wrote. Many years after both were dead, their poems were printed in a collection called *Tottel's Miscellany*, a book that is cherished by all students of literature as the first anthology of English verse. Other authors included in the volume are set down as "uncertain," an indication probably of the affected modesty of living contributors. The collection, though containing nothing of great poetic merit, was a cheering sign-post pointing the way to great things in poetry near at hand. It appeared in 1557, the year before Elizabeth came to the throne, and thus marks the beginning of our most marvelous poetic era. Its popularity brought forth many similar collections or "miscellanies," such as *The Paradyse of Daynty Devises*, *England's Helicon*, and *A Gorgious Gallery of Gallant Inventions*, titles that illustrate the flowery extravagance of fashionable literature.

Tottel's Miscellany, 1557

One work must be here mentioned for its historical interest, as about the last link connecting the old poetry with the new, *The Mirror for Magistrates*, written by various poets. It is a collection of lugubrious stories of fallen greatness, in the mediæval manner of Gower and Lydgate, with the mediæval purpose of showing "with how grievous plagues vices are punished in Great Persons and Magistrates." Our only present interest in this monument of dullness is connected with the contributions of Thomas Sackville, the *Induction* and the *Complaint of Buckingham*, poems which in Saintsbury's opinion "contain the best poetry written in the English language between Chaucer and Spenser." In spite of crudenesses, they contain enough evidence of an original poet

Thomas Sackville, 1536–1608

to justify the regret of the author's contemporaries that he should have abandoned the poet's craft for statecraft. In his smooth verses we clearly hear strains preluding the richer melody and statelier harmonies with which Spenser was about to lead the grand choral outburst of Elizabethan song. There is true poetry is such stanzas as this:—

> Then, looking upward to the heaven's leams,
> With nightès stars thick powdered everywhere,
> Which erst so glistened with the golden streams
> That cheerful Phoebus spread from down his sphere,
> Beholding dark oppressing day so near,
> The sudden sight reducèd to my mind
> The sundry changes that in earth we find.

PROGRAM OF WORK

CLASS READING. Utopia: Book II (Arber's Reprints, King's, Everyman's, Temple). Or selections: The land of Utopia (Arber, 72–76); Of the cities, 77–80; Of the magistrates, 80–82; Of warfare, 131–142; Of religions, 143–162.

The Scholemaster: Preface to the Reader; methods of teaching, 26–29, 31–33 (Arber); Lady Jane Grey, 46–48; Elizabeth's learning, 67–68; memories of Cambridge, 132–135. *Toxophilus:* Preface (Arber).

Latimer: *Sermon on the Ploughers* (Arber, Skeat). Selections from Latimer and Ascham in Manly.

Wyatt: *Forget not yet the tried intent; He complaineth to his Heart; To his Lute; The Lover's Appeal.*

Surrey: *Description of Spring; A Complaint by Night of the Lover; The Means to Attain Happy Life; A Praise of his Love; On the Death of Sir Thomas Wyatt.*

These poems of Wyatt and Surrey may be read in *Tottel's Miscellany* (Arber), Ward, Bronson, Manly, or Oxford Book of English Verse.

Sackville: *Induction* (Selections in Ward, Manly, or Bronson).

LITERARY HISTORY. Cambridge, vol. III, chs. i, ii, viii; Jusserand, vol. II, ch. i, secs. 3, 4, and ch. ii; Courthope, vol. II, chs. ii, iii (Wyatt and Surrey); Saintsbury's *Short History*, bk. v, ch. iii; Green, ch. vi, sec. 4 (The New Learning); Einstein's *Italian Renaissance in England;* Simonds's *Sir Thomas Wyatt and his Poems;* Chambers's *Cyclopædia*, vol. I, 128–135 (The English Bible); Ten Brink, vol. III, bk. VI; Morley, vol. VIII; Padel-

ford's *Early Sixteenth Century Lyrics;* Landor's *Imaginary Conversations* (Roger Ascham and Lady Jane Grey); Gardiner's *The Bible as Literature*, chs. viii, ix.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND. Green, ch. vi, secs. 5, 6; ch. vii, secs. 1, 2; Seebohm's *Era of the Protestant Revolution*, pt. II, chs. i. ii; pt. III, ch. ii; Symonds's *Renaissance in Italy:* Revival of Learning, ch. iii; Seebohm's *Oxford Reformers;* Manning's *Household of Thomas More* and Roper's *Life of More* (Everyman's, King's); Traill, vol. III, 85–95 (The New Learning); 193–196 (The English Bible); Froude's *Life and Letters of Erasmus*, Lecture VIII (*Praise of Folly*).

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION AND RESEARCH

1. Define broadly the term "Renaissance," and trace the course of the movement through Europe. 2. Distinguish sharply the New Learning from the Mediæval Learning. 3. Main features of the Renaissance in Italy (Symonds). 4. Explain the term "Humanism."

5. Work of the Oxford Reformers. 6. Life and character of Sir Thomas More (Green, 325–330, 351–352). 7. A picture of More and Erasmus in the Chelsea home. 8. Define the word "Utopian"; mention modern idealistic works of this character. 9. More's idea of toleration; of war; of crimes and punishments. 10. What political and social theories of to-day are found in the *Utopia?*

11. Effect of the Renaissance on the English language (Cambridge History, vol. III, ch. xx). 12. Ascham's protest against Latin. 13. Ascham's pedagogical theories. 14. Relation of the English Bible to literature and language. 15. Character of Hugh Latimer.

16. Influence of Wyatt and Surrey on the development of English poetry. 17. Poetry of the Amourists (Jusserand, vol. II, 382–403). 18. Petrarch's *Sonnets to Laura* (Kuhns's *Greater Poets of Italy*, ch. iv; Symonds's *Italian Literature*, vol. I, 82–97). 19. Study Wyatt's first sonnet (Tottel) as an illustration of his struggle with meter and rhyme.

CHAPTER VI

THE ELIZABETHAN AGE

1558–1603

The Renaissance in England reached its glorious culmination in the reign of Elizabeth, whose name designates the greatest period of English literature. Elizabeth aided literature not so much by direct patronage as by bringing about conditions favorable for the creation of literature. The nation had been cruelly distracted by civil strife, and its resources exhausted by a ruinous foreign policy. With Elizabeth came peace and prosperity, conditions necessary for the growth of art. The religious struggle was settled by a policy of wise toleration; tranquillity, foreign and domestic, became the fundamental principle of government. "No war, my Lords," was the Queen's imperious command to her counselors. The people were united in a real national life by patriotism and devotion to the Queen.

Peace and Prosperity for England

No other English sovereign was ever so popular, or so efficient in advancing the arts of civilization. Material prosperity was greatly increased, methods of farming were improved, manufacturing was developed, foreign trade extended, and the foundation of England's maritime supremacy established. People lived more comfortably; chimneys were added to the houses, and glass windows let in the sunshine. A new style of domestic architecture appeared; the light and graceful Elizabethan manor-house, surrounded by Italian gardens, displaced the military fortresses in which the nobility had always lived.

Elizabeth ruled her people with a strange, fascinating power. She gave her days and nights to pomp and splendor and gorgeous revelry. She loved splendid banquets and "progresses" and pageants, like the magnificent revels with which she was entertained by Leicester at Kenilworth. She loved personal adornment with an almost barbaric passion, and the royal extravagance was ruinously imitated. Courtiers vied with one another in lavish expenditure for dress; copying the styles of Italy, men glittered in satin and velvet, and sparkled with jewels. "Each man's worth is measured by his weed," Spenser complained, and "many broke their backs with laying manors on them," said Shakespeare.

Character of Elizabeth

QUEEN ELIZABETH

But the character of Elizabeth was composed of strangely contradictory qualities. With all her love of pleasure, she could truthfully say to her parliament: "No worldly thing under the sun is so dear to me as the love and good-will of my subjects." She was vain, frivolous, coquettish, and loved flattery as a child loves sweetmeats; she was violent in her temper, often vulgar in speech, treacherous to her friends, and brutal to her enemies. She had little real appreciation of poetry, yet she knew its worth, and could write tolerable rhymes herself. A witty epigram, an elegant phrase, or a pretty verse would win her smiles. But she was wise and far-sighted withal, and could outwit the greatest politicians of the age. With a

remarkably keen perception of merit, she drew into her service a company of brilliant intellects unparalleled in history. In her court, said Spenser, "the world's pride seems to be gathered."

The English people were now filled with a new spirit, the spirit of high hopes, large ideals, superb energy, and boundless enthusiasm, the spirit of exuberant and irresistible youth. They breathed a strange, intoxicating atmosphere. Life was invested with a new glory; the world was recreated, its heavens lifted and its horizon stretched into limitless space. The imagination was set free; nothing was too large to be possible or too strange to be true. An insatiable and world-wide curiosity possessed the minds of men. The young Bacon spoke for his age as well as for himself when he said: "I have taken all knowledge for my province." Drake, Frobisher, Hawkins, Raleigh, the Cabots explored the unknown seas and returned with tales as marvelous as any adventures of dreamland. Hakluyt's *Voyages* and *Purchas, His Pilgrimage*, records of the great deeds of Englishmen in all parts of the world, were the popular books of the time.

Spirit of the Age

Old ideas clashed with new, producing an exciting confusion. Greek, Roman, Italian, and English minds mingled in singular companionship. Gabriel Harvey writes to his friend Spenser from Cambridge: "Every day spawns new opinions; heresy in divinity, in philosophy, in humanity, in manners, grounded upon hearsay." Daily life was a mixture of flowery romance and practical realism, fantastic dreams and hard-headed statecraft,—a grand sport carried on by men and women of a royal type, glowing like happy, well-grown children, eager for untried experiences. The career of Sir Walter Raleigh, practical statesman, maker of dainty verses, elegant courtier and Queen's favorite, sea-rover fighting Spaniards, planting colonies in Virginia, searching for El Dorado in South American forests, and writing a *History of the World* in prison, with the death sentence hanging

Stimulating Intellectual Confusion

over him, is an epitome of the restless and manifold energies of the age.

Out of this fertile soil sprang Elizabethan literature, a literature of imagination and poetry; an outburst of inspiration marvelous alike for the lofty excellence and the profusion of its product. Literary expression was both a fashion and a passion. Every gentleman must be a "maker"; an essential of the courtier's equipment was an inkhorn and quill. In the space of about fifty years there were two hundred and thirty-three poets, and between 1553 and 1640 there were eight hundred and thirty-seven publishers in London. All sorts of material were converted into poetry, or at least into verse—history, topography, theology, even anatomy. The creative impulse worked joyously without restraint, leaving criticism to later ages. And the work of these happy verse-makers was often upon a scale vast and prodigious. Drayton's *Polyolbion* is nearly fifteen thousand verses in length, and the *Faerie Queene*, though a fragment, is more extensive than the *Canterbury Tales*. They were creating a literature that should be in all respects worthy of "the spacious times of great Elizabeth."

An Age of Creative Energy

Edmund Spenser

1552–1599

The hopes and lofty strivings of Wyatt and Surrey for the elevation of English poetry were realized in the works of Spenser, the first master poet after Chaucer. The first great landmark in the progress of English poetry is the *Canterbury Tales*, the second is the *Faerie Queene*.

Edmund Spenser was born in London, probably in 1552, six years before the opening of Elizabeth's reign. He was a pupil in the Merchant Taylor's School, and from there went to Pembroke Hall, Cambridge. At the end of seven years, in

1576, he left the university with the degree of Master of Arts. His life at Cambridge is known only by inference from his works. That he read extensively in the classics and modern Italian literature is certain, for he was a learned poet, and that he formed the habit of philosophic dreaming from a study of Plato and the Florentine philosophers is quite certain. He was also strongly influenced by the religious controversies of the period. Cambridge was in a turmoil of both theological and literary discussion. New beliefs and creeds were the natural product of Protestantism. Calvinism, on the one hand, was threatening the newly established church, and on the other a new pope, Pius V, was just entering upon the task of crushing English heresy. The Catholic standards were moving in a Northern rebellion, and the beautiful Queen of Scots, the Catholic rival of Elizabeth for the throne of England, was a source of constant alarm. The effect of all this upon Spenser's sensitive spirit was to make him a moderate Puritan and a bitter enemy of Rome.

Education and Early Influences

At Cambridge, Spenser began a lifelong friendship with Gabriel Harvey, an enthusiastic classicist and a recognized authority on literary matters. It was through this friend's good offices that he entered the service of the Earl of Leicester, and thus came to know Leicester's nephew, Philip Sidney, whose noble spirit became a molding influence upon all his thinking and writing. Sidney brought him to the court, and entertained him at Penshurst Castle, if tradition is true, as we must wish it to be; for it is pleasant to picture in imagination the leisurely communings of these young poet friends under the great Penshurst elms. Here quite likely, under Sidney's approving eye, Spenser completed *The Shepherd's Calendar*, which was published anonymously in 1579.

Spenser and Sidney

In 1580 Spenser went to Ireland as secretary to Lord Grey, the Lord Deputy, and there on that "salvage soil, far from

Parnasso Mount," he lived, almost an exile, the rest of his life. He attended his patron through a brutal campaign against the Irish and was rewarded with the castle of Kilcolman, which thenceforth was his home. Strangely enough, Spenser's only prose work, the *View of the Present State of Ireland*, was a vindication of the inhuman methods of dealing with the Irish adopted by Lord Grey. For a time Sir Walter Raleigh was his neighbor, and it was in Kilcolman Castle, before an odorous peat fire on the great hall hearth, as we may imagine, that Raleigh listened with strange delight to the first books of the *Faerie Queene*. He induced Spenser to accompany him to England, and presented him to the Queen, whose smiles were quickly captured by the splendid compliments contained in his poem.

Spenser in Ireland

EDMUND SPENSER

The first three books of the *Faerie Queene* were published in 1590, and Spenser was at once proclaimed by his fellow-poets, and without envy, to be master poet of them all. What others had been struggling in vain to achieve he reached at a bound, and established a new standard of poetic art for the English race. The poem was dedicated "to the most mighty and magnificent empress Elizabeth." Spenser now had the right to expect some handsome reward from the government, but he received only a small pension of £50. After long and fruitless waiting upon

Publication of the Faerie Queene

court favor, he returned to Ireland to dream of noble knights in fairyland and to struggle with rebellious tenants, solacing himself, doubtless, with Piers's reflection in his October eclogue:

> Cuddie, the praise is better than the price,
> The glory eke much greater than the gayne.

In *Colin Clouts Come Home Againe* he described this momentous visit to the court with Raleigh, the "Shepherd of the Ocean," complimenting his friends in lines of honeyed praise, deifying the Queen, "image of the heavens in shape humane," and expressing his disappointed mind freely about the "vaunted vanity" of court life.

When in 1596 three more books of the *Faerie Queene* were published he was rewarded with the office of sheriff for the County of Cork! So this fastidious dreamer of dreams, to eke out an income, must chase to justice Irish "kerns and gallowglasses." Three years later Tyrone's rebellion occurred, and Spenser's castle was sacked and burned. Ruined and broken-hearted, Spenser returned to England and died within three months,—"died for lack of bread," says Ben Jonson. We know nothing more of his sufferings. He was buried at the expense of the Earl of Essex in Westminster Abbey near the grave of Chaucer, "his hearse being attended by poets," says the chronicler Camden, "and mournful elegies and poems with the pens that wrote them thrown into the tomb."

Disappointment and Death

The first fruit of Spenser's Renaissance studies at Cambridge was *The Shepherd's Calendar*, which, as Dean Church remarks, "the *Faerie Queene* has eclipsed and almost obscured, as the sun puts out the morning star." Yet it was the morning star of a most glorious new day. The work is a series of eclogues, or idyls, one for each month of the year. The eclogue is a form of poetry in which country scenes are described and simple country people are portrayed in conversation with one another in the

The Shepherd's Calendar

guise of shepherds and shepherdesses. This pastoral form Spenser copied from the Italians, who copied it from Virgil, who copied it from the Greeks. In this long process of imitation, the native simplicity and charm of Theocritus, the father of pastoral poetry, had about all disappeared, and *The Shepherd's Calendar*, like the many attempts of other poets to reproduce this delightful Greek type in English, seems artificial and little more than an awkward affectation.

But beneath the quaint masquerade of piping rustics and bleating lambs there is much beautiful poetry in these eclogues, with wide variety of themes and meters, showing that Spenser was testing his powers by experiment, preening his wings for a greater flight. Besides pastoral dialogues in the Greek manner, there are moralized stories, satires upon the clergy, and, necessarily, a whole eclogue in praise of "fair Elisa, queen of shepherds all." English verse had never run on such nimble feet as in this "silver song":—

Bring hither the pink and purple columbine,
With gilliflowers;
Bring coronations and sops in wine,
Worne of paramours;
Strow me the ground with daffadowndillies,
And cowslips and kingcups and loved lilies;
The pretty paunce
And the chevisance
Shall match with the fair flowerdelice.

"There seems to be the same difference between the *Faerie Queene* and *The Shepherd's Calendar*," says an early editor of Spenser, "as between a royal palace and a little country seat." Royal splendor is perhaps the most common impression of this wonderful epic, and a splendor that could not have been reflected from any court but that of Elizabeth.

The *Faerie Queene* is an allegorical romance, which was to have consisted of twelve books of twelve cantos each, but only six books were completed. Spenser's model was Tasso's *Orlando Furioso*, the most brilliant and popular epic of chivalry

of his day, from which he borrowed freely. The plan of the poem was not to be unfolded until the twelfth book. Therefore a preliminary explanation of the action was given in a letter addressed to Raleigh and printed as an introduction. Gloriana, queen of fairyland, holds a twelve days' feast, and each day sends forth a knight to adventurous deeds in defense of one of the twelve moral virtues. Thus on the first day the Red Cross Knight sets forth to battle for Holiness. A book of the poem was assigned to each virtue, as Temperance, Chastity, Friendship, Justice, and Courtesy, and to the adventures of its knightly patron. In addition to these the virtue of Magnificence, or high-mindedness, "the perfection of all the rest," is represented by Prince Arthur, who is roaming through fairyland in search of the Queen.

Plan of the Faerie Queene

"The general end of all the book is to fashion a gentleman or noble person in virtuous and gentle discipline." This is Spenser's broad moral purpose: to set forth in a series of romantic adventures his ideal of an English gentleman, embodying the finest elements of character—freedom, courage, religion, temperance, courtesy, refinement of conscience, and largeness of soul. Sir Philip Sidney was his model, and the character of Arthur in the poem was to be the embodiment of all knightly virtues. These dream pictures of the ideal Englishman have been an important influence, we must believe, in the shaping of English conduct and character.

Moral Purpose

For modern critical taste the *Faerie Queene* is too vast and intricate in plan and too confused in action. The only unity is that of an intangible abstract conception of character. Its plot is like the "maze" of artificial gardens, in which the poet himself sometimes loses his way. Its construction is that of the Gothic cathedral, with infinite complexity of line and ornament, full of symbolism and mystery. The material is a medley of classic and romantic, Christian and pagan; fauns and satyrs of Greek mythology mingle with giants and mon-

sters of Celtic legend. Parnassus gets confused with the Mount of Olives, and cupids and angels live together in happy tolerance. But such incongruity was a Renaissance characteristic. The language is also a strange mixture. Ben Jonson was correct in saying that "Spenser in affecting the obsolete, writ no language," for no such language as that of the *Faerie Queene* was ever spoken in England. By reviving the language of Chaucer and by twisting, trimming, and polishing ordinary words to fit his rhymes, and forcing them into a Latin syntax, the poet devised a language appropriate for his fantastic dream world.

Typical Product of the Renaissance

The allegory is ineffective, lacking the directness and self-explaining quality of Bunyan's allegory. It is a double allegory, moral and historical, and an energetic ingenuity may discover a triple, and even a quadruple allegory. The Red Cross Knight represents holiness and the true religion, and also represents Sir Philip Sidney; Duessa is false religion, and Catholicism, and also Mary, Queen of Scots; Prince Arthur is the Earl of Leicester, and the Queen of Faerie is Elizabeth, who also appears as Gloriana, Belphœbe, and Britomart. Such complicated allegory becomes a burden, and so Spenser seems to have felt, for he gave less attention to it as the poem proceeded. The characters are merely the shadows of human beings. But the Elizabethan mind retained the mediæval liking for allegory, as well as for the elegant customs of chivalry. Cervantes in *Don Quixote* laughed at the decaying vanities of chivalry; Spenser saw in its survival among the fashionable people around him an opportunity for great moral lessons; so he transported England into dreamland.

Complicated Allegory

But finding fault with the *Faerie Queene* is like complaining of the sun for having spots. When criticism has exposed all its defects, it remains one of the greatest masterpieces in the language, unique and supreme in its peculiar beauty and power. No other poem has exercised such a permanently stimulating

and bewitching influence upon later poets. To enjoy, even to understand, the poem one must detach his mind from all daily realism and allow it to drift with the current of dreams into the "delightful land of Faerie," where it is always afternoon and where all things are invested with the purple mists of romance, and all creatures live under the spell of enchantment. Spenser is the magician, like Prospero, of this delectable land, and he uses his magic in a thousand ways. Beauty is his chief instrument, beauty of color and sound, ideal and spiritual beauty. His pictures are painted with exquisite art, and the music of his verse is marvelous. Listen to the melody, drawn directly from nature, in this stanza:—

Greatness of the Faerie Queene

> And, more to lulle him in his slumber soft,
> A trickling streame from high rock tumbling downe,
> And ever-drizling raine upon the loft,
> Mixed with a murmuring winde, much like the sowne
> Of swarming bees, did caste him in a swowne.
> No other noyse, nor peoples troublous cryes,
> As still are wont t'annoy the walled towne,
> Might there be heard: but carelesse Quiet lyes,
> Wrapt in eternall silence farre from enimyes.

Spenser's style, though deliberately artificial, is eminently fitted to his theme. The leading characteristics are smooth, musical movement and profuse expression. He knows no economy of time or space. He loves large surfaces for the display of detail and ornament. He is always dignified, serene, and serious. "Our sage and serious Spenser," Milton called him. Not a ripple of laughter ever disturbs the smooth surface of his poetry. To produce his charm, he chooses words with a dainty taste, and draws the reader on with all the allurements of his art, tempting him with beautiful phrases, rich colors, and soft music, lulling his mind into delicious forgetfulness.

Spenser's Poetic Style

Though he used alliteration to excess—"hunting the letter," as it was called—he was the first to show its real value as a

means of varying the harmonies of verse. The passion for beauty is all-pervasive. Certain passages may offend modern taste, but these are due to a streak of coarseness in the Elizabethan nature of which even Spenser was unconscious. He was not a great thinker, but a great artist. His poetry is most enjoyed by those most sensitive to impressions of artistic beauty; hence he is fitly called "the poet's poet."

For the modern mind afflicted with the "fever of the world," the *Faerie Queene* is a blissful refuge:—

> This is the port of rest from troublous toil,
> The mind's sweet inn from pain and wearisome turmoil.

Its elfin music soothes and purifies like the sound of sweet bells borne over English fields on a Sunday morning in June. "Whoever can endure unmixed delight," says Lowell, "whoever can tolerate music and painting and poetry all in one, whoever wishes to be rid of thought and to let the busy anvils of the brain be silent for a time, let him read in the *Faerie Queene*."

The stanza-form which Spenser invented, since known as the "Spenserian," has been admired by poets for the dignity, freedom of movement, and variety of musical effects of which it is capable. He took the eight-line stanza of the Italians, shifted the rhymes so as to get greater variety and energy, and added the long line of twelve syllables, called "Alexandrine," which completes the stanza with a prolonged cadence in perfect harmony with the slow movement of the thought.

The Spenserian Stanza

Spenser's minor poems would have made him a distinguished poet had he not written the *Faerie Queene*. When only seventeen, he wrote twenty-six sonnets, inspired by popular French poets. His best work as a sonneteer, however, is in the *Amoretti*, a series of eighty-eight sonnets, celebrating his courtship. The Italian title suggests the influence of Petrarch and Tasso, from whom he borrowed both ideas and imagery. In *Mother*

Hubberd's Tale, a reminiscence of Chaucer, he satirized the clergy and the court. The pastoral elegy *Astrofel* is a loving tribute of sorrow for the death of Sidney. His genius lacked the light, delicate, lyric touch so characteristic of the poets of his age. And yet he had lyric power of a lofty kind, as shown in the two splendid wedding odes, the *Prothalamion* and the *Epithalamion*. The first is a "spousal verse" in honor of the double marriage of Elizabeth and Katherine Somerset; the second is a rapturous commemoration of the poet's own nuptials. "For splendor of imagery, for harmony of verse, for delicate taste and real passion, the *Epithalamion*," says Saintsbury, "excels all other poems of its class." The *Prothalamion* was the last complete poem written by Spenser, and "merry London" still echoes with gentle pathos the melodious refrain:—

Minor Poems

Sweet Thames! run softly till I end my Song.

Sir Philip Sidney

1554–1586

Next to Spenser, the most important literary figure before we reach Shakespeare is Sir Philip Sidney, whose influence as a poet has been obscured by the peculiar glamour of his personality. He was born in 1554 at the family seat, Penshurst, in Kent, and was educated at Shrewsbury School and Christ Church, Oxford. Says his classmate and biographer, Fulke Greville: "His talk was ever of knowledge, his very play tending to enrich his mind." His education was completed by three years' travel upon the Continent, where he became the friend of kings, emperors, and the greatest scholars and artists of the age. In the court of Elizabeth he was literally like the young Hamlet, "the glass of fashion and the mould of form," the idol of society, the complete embodiment of the most approved qualities of man-

Character and Fame

hood. Active as poet, statesman, and perfect knight, and eager for great service, he chafed under the restraint of court life and would have sailed to the new world with Drake but for the Queen's prohibition. In 1586 he engaged in the war against Spain in aid of the Netherlands and received a mortal wound at Zutphen.

Sidney was but thirty-two years old when he died. He had lived a beautiful life and died a noble death. As many as two hundred elegies were written on the occasion. "It was accounted a sin for months afterwards for any gentleman of quality to wear gay apparel in London." No other Englishman was ever so loved and praised, and the name of Sidney still exercises an inspiring charm. Spenser called him—

> The heaven's pride, the glory of our days,

and for Shelley, two centuries later, he was—

> Sublimely mild, a spirit without spot.

None of Sidney's works were published during his lifetime, but the manuscript copies circulated freely among his friends. *An Apologie for Poetrie*, from which the beginning of English literary criticism is generally dated, was called forth by *The School of Abuse*, a bitter attack upon poets and poetry, written and impudently dedicated to Sidney by Stephen Gosson, a playwright who had become a Puritan. The *Apologie* is praise of poetry rather than criticism, and is a warm defense of the art Sidney most loved. Incidentally he was the first advocate of prose poetry, anticipating De Quincey by nearly three centuries. "It is not riming and versing that maketh poetry. One may be a poet without versing, and a versifyer without poetry."

Apologie for Poetrie

This theory he exemplified in his *Arcadia*, a pastoral romance written primarily to entertain his sister, the Countess of Pembroke. As a story, this work is artificial, diffuse, and

tedious, a characteristic Renaissance medley of classic and romantic matter, but it abounds in passages of idyllic grace and beauty and expressions of lofty ideals and sentiments. It is a poet's dream of the golden age. Its dainty tricks and affectations of style were widely imitated and "Arcadianism" became fashionable in the language of court circles. The book is still a charming companion for a summer afternoon under the trees, as it was in those happy days in the gardens of Wilton where Sidney enlivened each day of his visit to the Countess with the freshly written pages of his romance. Even Cowper felt the charm of "those Arcadian scenes" sung by "Sidney, warbler of poetic prose."

Arcadia

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY

Sidney's most important contribution to literature was *Astrophel and Stella*, a group or sequence of sonnets conceived in the manner of Petrarch's sonnets to Laura. These poems supposedly record the love of Sidney for Penelope Devereux, sister of the Earl of Essex. The genuineness of the sentiment has been questioned, but the emotion seems too deep to represent merely an imaginary personal experience. The general excellence of these sonnets indicates a long reach beyond the experimental efforts of Wyatt and Surrey. Indeed "Sidney may justly be reckoned," says Sidney Lee, "the first Englishman to illustrate the lyric capacity of the sonnet."

Astrophel and Stella

The publication of *Astrophel and Stella*, in 1591, was followed by a fashionable craze for sonneteering. Every poet must, like Sidney, celebrate his mistress, real or ideal, in this manner of lofty compliment; so the bookstalls were loaded with these amatory affectations in sonnet sequences. Between 1591 and 1597 more than two thousand sonnets were published. The idea, and largely the material, were borrowed from Petrarch and his followers in Italy and France, for the ordinary Elizabethan poet was an avowed imitator and pilferer. To revive Petrarch's "long-deceased woes with new-born sighs," as Sidney put it, was the highest literary achievement; to be called "an English Petrarch," as Harvey styled Spenser, was the highest praise. Among Petrarchian imitations were Samuel Daniel's *Delia*, William Percy's *Cœlia*, Henry Constable's *Diana*, Fulke Greville's *Cœlica*, Thomas Lodge's *Phillis*, Giles Fletcher's *Licia*, and others of tarnished luster, too many to be catalogued. Many of these graceful vanities are cold and bloodless productions, yet all give evidence of the eager taste of the period for poetic beauty and refinement. The greatest of the sonnet sequences naturally is Shakespeare's *Sonnets*, in which the Elizabethan sonnet reached its perfection.

The Sonneteers

The term "sonnet" was used rather loosely by the Elizabethans, being applied to any lyric expression, irrespective of metrical form. For example, in Clement Robinson's *Handefull of Pleasant Delites*, professing to contain "sundrie new sonets," there is not a single sonnet in the technical sense. The Petrarchian sonnet, the model for all English sonnet structure, consists of fourteen lines arranged in two groups, the octave and the sextet, each group having its own rhyme scheme. Many experimental forms were tried until Shakespeare established a permanent form, which is often called the "English sonnet" to distinguish it from the Italian type. This Elizabethan form was quaintly and accurately described by Gascoigne:—

Definition of the Sonnet

Sonnets are of fourtene lynes, every line conteyning tenne syllables. The first twelve do ryme in staves of foure lines by crosse meetre, and the last two ryming togither do conclude the whole.

A sonnet from the *Astrophel and Stella* sequence will present one of the many transitional forms, as well as the fine quality of Sidney's best work:—

With how sad steps, O Moon, thou climb'st the skies!
How silently, and with how wan a face!
What, may it be that even in heavenly place
That busy archer his sharp arrows tries!
Sure, if that long-with-love-acquainted eyes
Can judge of love, thou feel'st a lover's case,
I read it in thy looks; thy languisht grace,
To me, that feel the like, thy state descries.
Then, even of fellowship, O Moon, tell me,
Is constant love deem'd there but want of wit?
Are beauties there as proud as here they be?
Do they above love to be lov'd, and yet
Those lovers scorn whom that love doth possess?
Do they call virtue there ungratefulness?

The sonneteering impulse was only a part of the remarkable lyric outburst, at the end of the sixteenth century, that is unparalleled in the history of literature. Everybody seemed suddenly to be inspired with the gift of pure lyric expression. The little and the nameless poets as well as the great poets produced songs with a profusion of exquisite grace and sweetness, like the profusion of color and perfume when apple orchards are in bloom. Truly England "was a nest of singing birds." Everywhere songs gushed forth, in plays, romances, pamphlets, song-books, and miscellanies. Not only courtiers but priests and statesmen indulged in verse-making. Even the soldierly Earl of Essex, his secretary tells us, was wont "to evaporate his thoughts in a sonnet." The art of the song was perfected at this time, wrought out by a natural magic not known again until Burns. These happy poets, as one of them prettily says, made "music and sweet poetry agree." We now "set" poems to music, but

Elizabethan Lyrics

their tuneful gems were born in a musical setting—lyrics that sing themselves in rippling, laughing measures that express the pure ecstasy of a free life. Sometimes the poet himself was a musician, like Campion, who says in his *Book of Airs:* "I have chiefly aimed to couple my words and notes lovingly together." And this he accomplished with marvelous grace and charm.

Lyrics of Love

The common theme of these songs is love in its myriad moods—love and youth and springtime, buds and blossoms sparkling with morning dew. All might have said with Sidney, "Love doth hold my hand and makes me write." Some unknown singer, indifferent to fame, could with careless rapture throw off this dainty trifle in defense of the imperious theme:—

Fain would I change that note
To which fond love hath charm'd me,
Long long to sing by rote,
Fancying that that harm'd me:
Yet when this thought doth come,
"Love is the perfect sum
Of all delight,"
I have no other choice
Either for pen or voice
To sing or write.

O Love, they wrong thee much
That say thy sweet is bitter,
When thy rich fruit is such
As nothing can be sweeter.
Fair house of joy and bliss,
Where truest pleasure is,
I do adore thee;
I know thee what thou art,
I serve thee with my heart,
And fall before thee.

It is a delight merely to contemplate these butterfly wits, basking in the sunshine of an elegant pastime, addressing their honeyed verses to half real, half imaginary mistresses, sometimes in mere mockery of love's ardors and sometimes

with heartful seriousness. The passion is never profound; it is too happy for that; and yet there are frequent notes of religious thought and aspiration, like Campion's:—

> Awake, awake! thou heavy sprite
> That sleep'st the deadly sleep of sin!

Some of the familiar and classic examples of these charming lyrics, perfect in their simplicity of art and emotion, are Breton's *Phillida and Corydon*, Marlowe's *Passionate Shepherd to his Love*, Dyer's *My Mind to me a Kingdom is*, Barnfield's *As it fell upon a Day*, Shakespeare's *Hark, hark! the Lark*, and Ben Jonson's *To Celia*. From a hundred others that press to be named or quoted, listen to this strain of melodious compliment from Thomas Lodge:—

> Like to the clear in highest sphere,
> Where all imperial beauty shines,
> Of self-same color is her hair,
> Whether unfolded or in twines;
> Heigh ho, fair Rosaline!
> Her eyes are sapphires set in snow,
> Refining heaven by every wink;
> The gods do fear whenas they glow,
> And I do tremble, when I think,
> Heigh ho, would she were mine!

The Elizabethan spirit of patriotism combined with poetic enthusiasm is especially illustrated in a group of historical poets, who worked with prodigious patience to make poetry out of unpoetical material. William Warner's *Albion's England* is a medley of history and story, written in the quaint long lines known as "fourteeners." The poem is singular in that it shows no effect of the prevailing Italian influence. Samuel Daniel versified the *Civil Wars of York and Lancaster*, and treated with monotonous elegance another historical theme in *The Complaint of Rosamond*. In his *Sonnets to Delia* and in the admirable *Epistle to the Countess of Cumberland* there is genuine poetry. His mas-

The Historical Poets

tery of the technique of verse and a smooth and graceful style won from his contemporaries the epithet "well-languaged Daniel," and his sensible prose essay, *The Defense of Rhyme*, ended the effort, begun by Gabriel Harvey and Sidney, to introduce classic meters into English verse.

Drayton's Polyolbion

The most remarkable of these patriotic productions is Michael Drayton's *Polyolbion*, that is to say, "A Chorographical Description of all the Tracts, Rivers, Mountains, Forests, and other Parts of this Renowned Isle of Great Britain, with intermixture of the most Remarkable Stories, Antiquities, Wonders, Rarities, Pleasures, and Commodities of the same, Digested into a Poem." The method of digesting geography into poetry may be illustrated by a few lines about the "far-wand'ring Ouse," who—

> Through the *Bedfordian* fields deliciously doth strain,
> As holding on her course, by *Huntingdon* again,
> From *Brackley* breaking forth, through soils most heavenly sweet,
> By *Buckingham* makes on, and crossing *Watling-Street*,
> She with her Lesser *Ouse* at *Newport* next doth twin,
> Which from Proud *Chiltern* near, comes eas'ly ambling in.

And thus the rivers amble and the hills hobble through nearly fifteen thousand of these topographical verses, resting with strict accuracy at every rhyme and cesural pause. Through his enthusiasm for the "delights and rarities" of his own country, "delivered by a true native Muse," Drayton committed the mistake with which he charged some of his fellow-poĕts:—

> Inforcing things in verse for poesy unfit.

That Drayton was, however, capable of real poetry is shown in his splendid *Ballad of Agincourt*, which Tennyson imitated, and in his fairy fantasy, *Nymphidia*, one of the most exquisite trifles in our literature. Thus he describes the palace of Queen Mab, which stands somewhere on "the way up to the Moon":—

> The walls of spiders' legs are made,
> Well morticed and finely laid,

He was the master of his trade,
It curiously that builded;
The windows of the eyes of cats,
And for the roof, instead of slats,
Is covered with the skins of bats,
With moonshine that are gilded.

PROGRAM OF WORK

CLASS READING. SPENSER: *Faerie Queene*, bk. I, canto i, for critical study; bk. II, canto vii, 1–34, The Cave of Mammon; bk. IV, canto x, 21–29, The Garden of Venus; bk. VI, canto ix, Sir Calidore's Wooing of Pastorell; *Shepherd's Calendar*, January and May; *Prothalamion; Epithalamion; Amoretti*, xxxiv, xxxvii, xl, lii, lxxv.

SIDNEY: *Astrophel and Stella*, 5, 18, 31, 39, 74, 84, 87, 90; *Philomela; A Dirge; Arcadia*, selections (Manly, Craik, Chambers).

ELIZABETHAN LYRICS: Spenser's *A Ditty: In Praise of Eliza;* Dyer's *My Mind to me a Kingdom is;* Lyly's *Cupid and Campaspe, What Bird so sings;* Peele's *Cupid's Curse;* Greene's *Sephestia's Song to her Child, Song: Sweet are the Thoughts;* Marlowe's *The Passionate Shepherd to his Love; Reply to the Passionate Shepherd* (attributed to Raleigh); Raleigh's *The Lie, His Pilgrimage;* Lodge's *Rosalynd's Madrigal, Rosalynd's Description, Love's Wantonness;* Nashe's *Spring;* Daniel's *Sonnet: To Delia, Sonnet: Beauty Sweet love, Love is a Sickness Full of Woes;* Campion's *Of Corinna's Singing, Now Winter Nights Enlarge, Cherry Ripe, Awake, Awake, thou Heavy Sprite, Sonnet: The Charm;* Breton's *Phillida and Corydon;* Bolton's *A Palinode;* Dekker's *O Sweet Content, Lullaby;* Ben Jonson's *Hymn to Diana, To Celia, Song: Still to be Neat, The Triumph of Charis, Epitaph on Salathiel Pavy, To the Memory of My Beloved Master, William Shakespeare;* Drummond's *To the Nightingale, Sonnet: Of this Fair Volume, Sonnet: I Know that all Beneath the Moon Decays;* Drayton's *Sonnet: Since there's no Help;* John Fletcher's *Weep no More, Melancholy, Shepherds all and Maidens Fair.*

SHAKESPEARE'S LYRICS: Songs—*A Morning Song for Imogen, Silvia, Sigh no more, Ladies, Ariel's Song, In the Greenwood, Winter, A Sea Dirge, Take, O Take those Lips Away, It was a Lover and his Lass, Blow, blow, thou Winter Wind.* Sonnets—23, 29, 32, 33, 73, 98, 102, 116.

DRAYTON: *Ballad of Agincourt; Nymphidia.*

AVAILABLE TEXTS. Schelling's *Elizabethan Lyrics;* Bullen's *Elizabethan Lyrics;* Palgrave's *Golden Treasury; Oxford Book of English Verse;* Spenser's *Poems*, Globe Edition; *Faerie Queene*,

bk. I (Cl. Press, R. L. S., Maynard, Longmans). Reprints of Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella*, Daniel's *Delia*, Drayton's *Idea*, Campion's *Book of Airs*, may be found in Arber's *English Garner;* Sidney's *Apologie for Poetrie* in Arber's Reprints. Most of the lyrics are in Ward, Bronson, and Manly.

BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM. Church's *Spenser* (E. M. L.); Hales's Introduction (Globe Edition of Spenser); Lowell's *Among my Books* (Spenser); Dowden's *Transcripts and Studies* (Spenser); Symonds's *Sidney* (E. M. L.); Fox-Bourne's *Sidney;* Lee's *Great Englishmen of the Sixteenth Century* (Sidney, Spenser); Courthope, vol. II, chs. viii, ix (Sidney, Spenser); Mackail's *Springs of Helicon;* Hazlitt's *The English Poets* (Chaucer and Spenser); Woodberry's *The Torch* (Spenser); Lamb's *Last Essays of Elia* (Sidney's Sonnets).

LITERARY HISTORY. Saintsbury's *Elizabethan Literature*, chs. i, iv; Cambridge, vol. III, chs. xi (Spenser), xii (The Elizabethan Sonnet), vol. IV, ch. vi (Song-Books), viii (Campion), x (Drayton); Jusserand, vol. II, bk. v; Lee's *Life of Shakespeare*, Appendix ix (Vogue of the English Sonnet); Erskine's *The Elizabethan Lyric;* Morley, vol. IX; Schelling's *Elizabethan Lyrics* (Introduction); Reed's *English Lyrical Poetry*, ch. iv; More's *Shelburne Essays*, Second Series (Elizabethan Sonnets); Tomlinson's *The Sonnet;* Landor's *Imaginary Conversations* (Essex and Spenser, and Lord Brooke and Sir Philip Sidney); Schelling's *The English Lyric*, ch. iii; Mackail's *Lectures on Poetry* (Shakespeare's Sonnets); Mair's *Modern English Literature*, ch. ii; Seccombe and Allen's *Age of Shakespeare*, vol. I.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND. Creighton's *Age of Elizabeth;* Traill, vol. III, 377–398; Green, ch. vii, secs. iii–vii; Cheyney, ch. xiii; Stephenson's *The Elizabethan People;* Wilson's *Life in Shakespeare's England;* Hall's *Society in the Elizabethan Age;* Harrison's *Elizabethan England;* Schelling's *Progresses of Elizabeth;* Thornbury's *Shakespeare's England;* Kingsley's *Westward Ho!;* Scott's *Kenilworth.*

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION AND RESEARCH

1. Account for the prominence of poetry in the Elizabethan age. 2. Make a list of the great men of the Elizabethan reign. 3. Describe the life of the court (see histories).

4. Outline of the life of Spenser (consult biographies). 5. The story, or "Argument," of the *Faerie Queene*. 6. Explain the allegory in bk. I, canto i. 7. What would be Spenser's justification for re-

pulsive pictures, like the monster Error in this canto? 8. Spenser's descriptions of nature. 9. Discuss the tributes to Elizabeth, especially in bk. VI, canto x, 5–28. 10. Describe technically the Spenserian stanza, and trace its use in nineteenth century poetry. 11. Influence of Chaucer on Spenser; make lists of Chaucerian words, and of Spenser's invented words.

12. Spenser's poetry as an embodiment of the forces of the Renaissance: *a*. Love of the classics; *b*. Italian influence; *c*. Religious reform. 13. Compare Spenser's August Eclogue with the fifth Idyl of Theocritus (Lang's translation). 14. Are Spenser's characters "brilliant phantoms, and nothing more," as Taine declares?

15. Sidney's personality (consult biography). 16. Story of Sidney's death. 17. Sidney and Spenser at Penshurst—an imaginative sketch. 18. Study the character and structure of the sonnet (Alden's *Introduction to Poetry*, 325–332). 19. Origin and character of the sonnet sequences. 20. Study the variety of form and meter in Elizabethan lyrics. 21. Compare these lyrics with modern lyrics, in respect to spirit and substance.

CHAPTER VII

ELIZABETHAN PROSE

In the development of literary expression, artistic prose is always much later in its appearance than verse, owing apparently to an instinctive feeling that the speech of every-day life cannot be raised to the dignity of a literary instrument. We have already seen how Roger Ascham felt about the affectation of writing in Latin to give distinction to prose. Even when Latin was discarded in favor of the vernacular, writers continued to construct their English sentences on the basis of the Latin syntax, making them long, cumbrous, and artificial. In an age of intense literary enthusiasm, it was quite natural that more definite attention should be given to the artistic possibilities of prose. At first it was made rich and gorgeous with foreign decoration, like the splendid costumes which people wore, the stiff ruffs, huge farthingales, jeweled silks and velvet. "A golden sentence is worth a world of treasure," says one of these prose decorators.

Growth of English Prose

Gradually the classic architecture of the sentence was cleared away, and it became idiomatic and intelligible, and finally artistic. A native style appeared in prose, as in poetry, evolved, however, through many experimental pitfalls and monumental mistakes. Several things contributed to this growth of a simpler and more natural prose: the theological quarrels; the beginning of literary criticism; the new English Bible; the pamphlets that served in place of newspapers for breezy discussion, personal satire, and popular entertainment; and especially the

drama, in which the prose sentence became clear and flexible, as in the admirable prose speeches in *Hamlet*. From these varied uses of prose by the Elizabethan writers, two great types of literature received their initial impulses, the novel and the essay.

The first conscious effort to make prose a formidable rival of verse was John Lyly's *Euphues*, a book that occupies a unique position in English literature. The author wrote better things in his plays and lyric poems, but this book gave him his fame. *Euphues: The Anatomy of Wit* appeared in 1579, and the second part, *Euphues and his England*, in 1580. The two parts together constitute our first English novel. It is a kind of romance, with a weak thread of story used mainly to connect the author's discourses on education, religion, love, friendship, the follies of youth, and the manners of society; concluding, like all loyal Elizabethan books, with unmeasured praise of the glorious Queen, who is "of singular beautie and chastitie, excelling in the one Venus, in the other Vesta"; all of which, as described on the title-page, is still measurably "delightful to be read, and nothing hurtful to be regarded." The chief interest of the book is its singularity of style, known in every school rhetoric as "Euphuism."

Euphuism

The main features of this style are antithesis, with balanced sentence structure; alliteration, used especially to emphasize antithetical words; puns, quaint conceits and affectations; and similes, often in elaborate lists, taken from classic history, mythology, and the mediæval bestiaries. Thus the fickle heroine soliloquizes:—

> So I, although I loved *Philautus* for his good properties, yet seeing *Euphues* to excell him, I ought by Nature to lyke him better. By so much the more therefore my chaunge is to be excused, by how much the more my choyce is excellent; and by so much the lesse I am to be condemned by how much the more *Euphues* is to be commended. Is not the Diamond of more valew then the Rubie bicause he is of more vertue? Is not the Emeraulde preferred before the Saphire for his wonderfull properties? Is not *Euphues* more prayse worthy then

Philautus, being more wittie. But fye *Lucilla*, why dost thou flatter thy selfe in thine owne folly? Canst thou faine *Euphues* thy friend, whom by thine owne words thou hast made thy foe?

Lyly was regarded as a prose artist. His ingenious expression, though based upon similar experiments in Spanish and Italian literature, was accepted as original and became enormously popular with the court exquisites. "That beautie in court which could not parley euphueisme was as little regarded as she which now there speaks not French," said Edward Blount in 1632. Thomas Nashe says that he read *Euphues* "when a little ape in Cambridge" and "thought it was ipse ille"; and it long continued to be *ipse ille* for all who in the craze of a fashionable affectation desired, as Lyly himself hinted, "to hear finer speech than the language would allow." For fifty years literature was infected with it. But there were mockers as well as imitators. Shakespeare made merry with the euphuists in *Love's Labor's Lost*, and the crabbed Drayton jibed at Lyly's "ridiculous tricks"—

Vogue of Euphuism

> Talking of Stones, Stars, Plants, Fishes, Flyes,
> Playing with words and idle Similes.

Lyly's success was naturally followed by many similar ventures, and a group of bright-witted writers was for a time busily engaged in supplying the demand for this new literary entertainment. The best of these flowery romances is Sidney's *Arcadia*, in which the euphuistic ornament is less artificial and more imaginative and poetic. Sidney's direct influence is seen in the *Menaphon* of Robert Greene, whose *Pandosto* furnished Shakespeare with the substance of his *Winter's Tale*. Thomas Lodge's *Rosalynde*, the source of *As You Like It*, is still readable, affording a pleasing sense of far-away idyllic grace and sentiment. The plots of these stories were generally laid in Arcadia or some neighboring province of dreamland, where it is morning all the day long, where the fields are always strewn with roses and violets

Elizabethan Romances

lush with heavenly dew, and where "shepherd boys pipe as though they should never be old."

But there came a reaction against the romantic and sentimental story, and the story-writers, especially Greene, Nashe, Lodge, and Deloney, began to write realistic stories in which the scene was transferred from Arcadia to the streets of London.

Realistic Stories

The most advanced and consistent of these experimenters with realism was Thomas Deloney, whose *Gentle Craft* is a series of stories about shoemakers. The picaresque novel of the Spanish type appeared, in which a rogue (*picaro*) is the hero and his rogueries are the substance of the story. As Lyly pictured the manners of court society, Greene and his associates now pictured the life of the common citizen, with a robust realism that anticipated the larger work of Defoe and Fielding.

There was much historical writing in the Elizabethan period, devoted mainly to the celebration of England's glory, but with the exception of Bacon's *History of Henry VII* the historical method made little advance beyond the crude form of the "Chronicle." Holinshed's *Chronicle of England, Scotland, and Ireland*, comprehending the history of Great Britain from Noah's Flood to the year of publication, 1578, was immortalized by Shakespeare, who closely followed its facts and even its language in several of his plays. Harrison's *Description of England*, included in Holinshed's book, Stow's *Survey of London*, and Camden's *Annals of Queen Elizabeth* must be read if one would know intimately the England that Shakespeare knew. The celebrated *History of the World* by Raleigh, which did not get beyond the Roman conquest of Macedon, is a Saharan desert of unsifted facts, with here and there refreshing little oases of personal reflection where the author's fine creative talent was suddenly warmed to poetic eloquence. The best known prose of Raleigh is the manly and stirring account of the *Last Fight of the Revenge at Sea*, which Tennyson molded into a ringing ballad of English

The Historians

heroism. Among the historians must be included John Foxe, whose *Book of Martyrs* still smells of fire,—an account of the Smithfield martyrdoms in homely, vigorous, and realistic prose that was once as generally read as the Bible.

The eager spirit of the Renaissance appears nowhere more definitely than in the busy work of the Elizabethan translators, who levied upon all provinces of ancient lore for the enrichment of the new English literature. They worked with joy and triumph, somewhat in the manner of conquest and plunder; for these translators were not scrupulous in their use of originals, taking what pleased them and using it in any manner that pleased them. Homer, Virgil, and their fellows are often hardly recognizable in their English dress. The inspiration and the meat of the matter were the main things; the duty of "close" or literal rendering of texts, now required, was then unknown. Indeed, the originals were sometimes not consulted at all, the essence being more easily extracted from some French rendering. For example, North's celebrated translation of *Plutarch's Lives* was made from the French version of Amyot; with this second removal from the original, the *Lives* became an English classic of clear, robust prose with genuine Elizabethan flavor. This book would have exerted an important influence even had Shakespeare not taken from it the material for his Roman plays. How well he liked its sturdy language may be seen by comparing these lines with *Julius Cæsar*, act I, sc. i, 192–5:—

Translations of the Classics

> Another time when Cæsar's friends complained unto him of Antonius and Dolabella, that they pretended some mischief towards him, he answered them again, "As for those fat men and smooth-combed heads," quoth he, "I never reckon of them; but these pale-visaged and carrion-lean people, I fear them most," meaning Brutus and Cassius.

The prince of the translators was George Chapman, whose version of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* is one of the celebrated books of our literature. Keats said that it made him a poet,

and all lovers of poetry are led by it into delightful acquaintance with "deep-browed Homer." Chapman handled the Greek text with such freedom and originality as to produce not so much a translation as a great Elizabethan poem based on Homer. And yet its long resounding lines so adequately reproduce the spirit and sweeping movement of Homer's verse as to persuade a classical scholar like Saintsbury that "Chapman is far nearer Homer than any modern translator in any modern language." It is certainly one of the best illustrations of the Renaissance genius for appropriating and assimilating the classics of another tongue.

Chapman's Homer

Prose expression was improved in respect to naturalness and flexibility by the popular pamphlets of the time. These publications, taking the place of the modern newspaper and magazine, contained a mixture of religious zeal, literary criticism, social and personal satire, and grotesque humor, that afforded an outlet for every wild fancy of the lawless wits. Well-known writers like Greene, Nashe, Lyly, and Sidney's friend Harvey kept up a merry warfare, cudgeling each other with sturdy crab-tree English that produced both stings and laughter. The most famous war of pamphlets was the "Marprelate Controversy," originating in the Puritan reaction against the Established Church, which brought forth one satirist, the unknown "Martin Marprelate, Gentleman," who may worthily be regarded as the forerunner of our greatest prose satirist, Jonathan Swift.

Pamphleteering

It would seem as if an aptitude for religious controversy was from an early period a part of the English character. The right to protest, established by the Reformation, soon became a habit of protesting, which produced a thorny pathway for reformed religion, seemingly without end. When not fighting with a foreign enemy, the English must needs be fighting about religion among themselves.

Once during the Elizabethan period theological argument

was lifted to the high plane of real literature and profound philosophy. As a result of the Reformation, a new national church had been established, but its doctrines were not generally understood, and its authority was not fully accepted. Richard Hooker in his *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* expounded the principles of the new religious establishment, answering the criticisms of the Romanists on the one hand and of the Puritans on the other, in a remarkably self-restrained, dignified, and tolerant spirit; and on the foundations that he established, the English Church still stands. The personality of this "most learned, most humble, most holy man," the story of his domestic tribulations and of his single-minded devotion to the making of his one great book, must be learned from the quaint and artless biography written by Isaac Walton.

Richard Hooker, 1554–1600

It is the habit of literary historians, like Richard Garnett, to rank Hooker "among the very greatest masters of English prose," and his monumental work as "one of the greatest examples in our language of ample, stately, and musical expression." But this mastership is now largely taken for granted by the literary student, except when investigating the historical aspects of prose style. The *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* is a classic, but a formidable classic. Yet it would be a misfortune to miss an acquaintance with some of the passages of rhetorical grandeur with which the long stretches of argumentation are relieved, such as the passage in praise of law and that in vindication of music in the church service. The style is Latinized with the effect, not of pedantic and confused expression, but of a voluminous grace and dignity, flowing often into splendid rhythms of verbal harmony. Hooker's personal quality was humility, his literary quality was stateliness. A genius so constituted was peculiarly fitted for the great theme to which his life was consecrated; and justly the English Church reveres him as her greatest interpreter.

Hooker's Prose Style

Francis Bacon

1561–1626

The greatest figure in Elizabethan prose, and next to Shakespeare the greatest intellectual figure of the period, is Francis Bacon. "These two incomparable men," says Macaulay, "the prince of poets and the prince of philosophers, made the Elizabethan age a more glorious and important era in the history of the human mind than the age of Pericles, of Augustus, or of Leo." Though chiefly eminent in his own time as statesman and philosopher, Bacon made contributions to literature of imperishable interest and worth.

Francis Bacon was born in York House, near Charing Cross, London, in 1561. His father, Sir Nicholas Bacon, was Lord Keeper of the Seal. William Cecil, Lord Burghley, the Queen's prime minister, was his uncle. His mother, a sister of Lady Cecil, was a woman of remarkable character and "exquisitely skilled in the Greek and Latin tongues." Thus his boyhood was spent in the presence of all the brilliancy of Elizabeth's court. Recognizing his precocious talents, the Queen was wont to call him her "young Lord Keeper." At twelve he went to Trinity College, Cambridge, where he remained only two years, for the reason probably that his father "thought fit to frame and mold him for the arts of state." For this purpose he was sent to France in the suite of the English ambassador. His father's death two years later had a serious effect upon his fortunes and character.

Fortunate Youth

Deprived of the means to pursue the liberal course of life intended for him, Bacon became an importunate suitor for court favors and began the lifelong conflict between his ambition to be rich and powerful and his ambition to be wise and useful to mankind. He studied law at Gray's Inn, was admitted to the bar in 1582, became a member of Parliament, and obtained the unimportant position of Queen's Counsel. According to the testi-

Conflict of Purposes

mony of Ben Jonson, he was an impressive speaker. "The fear of every man that heard him was lest he should make an end." But greatness came slowly. His uncle, from whom he had the right to expect aid, did nothing for him, possibly jealous for his own son's interest and possibly suspicious of a philosophic dreamer in the service of the state. Certainly the wisdom of his plan of life was doubtful. In a letter to Burghley he declared, "I have taken all knowledge to be my province," and argued that as a necessary means of accomplishing his plans for extending human knowledge he must obtain office and fame.

The one faithful friend of Bacon who worked diligently for his advancement was the Queen's brilliant favorite, the Earl of Essex. On the part of Essex, this friendship was a generous and ardent attachment. Bacon returned this devotion with a cold, calculating sense of the usefulness of such a friend, and when the Earl was tried for treason, used his keenest intellectual powers, as Queen's Counsel, to bring his friend and benefactor to the block. He pleaded as an excuse his duty to the state, but he could not remove from his reputation the stain of base treachery to friendship.

Bacon and Essex

With the accession of James I, Bacon's fortunes rose at once; in rapid succession he became Attorney-General, Privy Councilor, Lord Keeper, and Lord Chancellor, with the titles of Baron Verulam and Viscount St. Albans. He had now achieved his highest hopes for worldly glory, but calamity was awaiting him. "All rising to great place is by a winding stair," he had written, and his own winding course had not always been worthy of his great mind. During a Parliamentary investigation of government abuses, he was charged with receiving bribes in his court, and he answered the charge with an immediate confession and the humble petition: "I beseech your Lordships be merciful to a broken reed." It was useless to plead

Bacon's High Place and Fall

that he had but followed the custom of his times, and that he had always been honest and just in his decisions as a judge. The fall was swift and terrible. In less than two months his life was changed from princely power to public ignominy. He was fined £40,000, with imprisonment in the Tower at the King's pleasure, and was prohibited from ever holding a public office or a seat in Parliament.

FRANCIS BACON

With singular composure Bacon turned at once to his literary and scientific pursuits, and the remaining five years of his life were spent in elaborating and publishing his most important works. In 1626 he died from the effects of a cold contracted in an experiment to test the preservative power of snow, a martyr to the enthusiasm for knowledge to which his life had from the first been dedicated.

"The life of Francis Bacon is one which it is a pain to write or to read," says Dean Church. "It is difficult to imagine a grander and more magnificent career; and his name ranks among the few chosen examples of human achievement. And yet it was not only an unhappy life; it was a poor life." No man ever had a larger and clearer conception of real nobility, and no man ever failed so fatally to live up to the nobility of his own ideals. False as he was to others, he was chiefly false to himself. No great author was ever so separated in his life from the spirit of his

Bacon's Character

writings,—"the difference between the soaring angel and the creeping snake." Macaulay's arraignment of Bacon's character is pitilessly severe, but no friendly critic has been able to deny its essential justice. In *The New Atlantis*, Bacon condemns the judge who is "twice paid," yet in his own court he could accept a gift of a thousand pounds from an anxious suitor. This duplicate, self-contradictory character is common in weak men, but in great men like Bacon it is a bewildering puzzle, a depressing problem that is never satisfactorily solved.

Bacon's first publication was a little volume of ten *Essays*, which appeared in 1597. This was reprinted in 1612 with enlargement of the original essays and twenty-nine new ones. Again in 1625 the collection was reprinted with more alterations of the text and twenty additional essays. "Certain brief notes set down rather significantly than curiously," he described them; yet he did bestow the most painstaking care upon them, only, however, with the purpose of increasing their significance and practical worth. His aim was didactic rather than literary; he wished to make both substance and form such as would "come home to men's business and bosoms"; and unwittingly he made the most important contribution to the prose literature of his age. The form as well as the name, *Essay*, was borrowed from France and established by Bacon as a new literary species in England.

Essays, 1597–1625

The first impression one gets from these essays is that of a fresh, thrifty, modern spirit. They are packed with wisdom, sagacious and practical, tending to the kind called "worldly." "A little bible of earthly wisdom," is Emerson's summary. One finds not much about ideal virtues, but much keen insight and excellent counsel, and sometimes profound and uplifting thoughts. The topics are from the concrete experiences of daily life: "Of Adversity," "Of Travel," "Of Parents and Children," "Of Seeming Wise," "Of Studies," and about each topic he says something that is

Qualities of the Essays

penetrating and illuminating. The wisdom is closely allied to self-interest and occasionally is more crafty than scrupulous, as in the essay "Of Cunning." If one would be successful, he hints, one must not have "too much of the honest," or be an extreme lover of country or master. "For when a man placeth his thoughts without himself he goeth not his own way." The limitations as well as the strength of Bacon are revealed in the essays. He possessed a mind guided not by human affection but by the dry light of the reason, a conscience that was intellectual rather than moral. Compare what he says of friendship and of the "weak passion," love, with Emerson's treatment of these themes. "Bacon creeps where Emerson soars."

Style of the Essays

The style of the essays is condensed, pithy, aphoristic. The short, loosely connected sentences are sometimes too heavily loaded with meaning; but generally they are clear, crisp, and vital, flashing upon the reader's mind like keen sword thrusts, and stimulating with a sudden thrill of luminous thought. "Dispersed meditations" Bacon called the essays, but they are really the compressed product of his meditations. He quotes extensively, and his quotations are not mere pedantic ornament, but are closely pertinent to the theme. So too, metaphors and similes, which he uses liberally, are always logically apt and illustrative. In such incisive, compact prose there can be little music, but here and there a grand thought lifts the expression upon a fine rhythmical cadence, as in the opening of the essay "Of Atheism": "I had rather believe all the fables in the Legend and the Talmud and the Alcoran than that this universal frame is without a mind." There is imagination in the essays, but no poetry; Bacon's dry, logical, insensitive faculties were as firmly imbedded in prose as the Sphinx in the Egyptian sand. For this reason, if for no other, Bacon could not have written the plays of Shakespeare, as some people strangely try to believe.

A few sentences from the *Essays* will show how widely current are his thoughts in popular quotation:—

Revenge is a kind of wild justice.
God Almighty first planted a garden.
He that hath wife and children hath given hostages to fortune.
There is in human nature generally more of the fool than of the wise.
Speech of a man's self ought to be seldom, and well chosen.
There is no vice that doth so cover a man with shame as to be found false and perfidious.
Seek not proud riches, but such as thou maist get justly, use soberly, distribute cheerfully, and leave contentedly.
Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested.
Reading maketh a full man, conference a ready man; and writing, an exact man; and therefore if a man write little, he had need have a great memory; if he confer little, he had need have a present wit; and if he read little, he had need have much cunning, to seem to know that he doth not.

Bacon's highest and purest ambition was to direct into a course of practical usefulness the new spirit of inquiry that was energizing the age. A knowledge of nature he believed to be the greatest source of good to humanity, and his desire was "to extend the empire of man over matter" by establishing a new method of acquiring this knowledge. The explanation of the method is given in the *Novum Organon*, the "New Instrument." The substance of his teaching is to study the workings of nature with a free mind and a clear vision, to observe objects accurately and collect all the facts about them, and from these facts deduce laws and principles; to employ what we now call the inductive method of reasoning.

The Novum Organon

The mediæval philosophers had used the opposite or deductive form of reasoning, by which theories and principles were first assumed or asserted and the facts then forced to fit the theories. This method had led to all sorts of error and unprofitable speculation. Men must "renounce their notions," said Bacon, "and begin to form an acquaintance with things." Though he failed to devise a perfect reasoning instrument, yet from the impulse which Bacon gave to the investigation of nature, modern experimental science dates its beginning.

As an introduction to his great philosophical work, Bacon made a survey of the progress and defects of the knowledge of the ages in *The Advancement of Learning*, which next to the *Essays* is his most important contribution to literature. The matter of this essay is interesting, the style is more easy and flowing than that of the *Essays*, and the whole is enlivened with the spirit of a generous enthusiasm. This work and the *Novum Organon* were parts of the *Instauratio Magna*, in which all knowledge was to be systematized and collected into one "rich storehouse for the glory of God and the relief of man's estate." This was not completed, but the splendid fragment stands as a monument to one of the world's greatest minds.

Advancement of Learning

One other work possesses a literary interest, *The New Atlantis*, in which Bacon pictures an imaginary community of the Utopian type living in the enjoyment of the benefits derived from a knowledge of nature. The description of the "House of Solomon," founded by the people of the island "for the interpreting of nature and the producing of great and marvelous works for the benefit of men," gave the hint for founding the Royal Society. One is astonished to find that Bacon in this book anticipated many of the familiar inventions of to-day, as the telephone, airship, submarine, microscope, and weather bureau. *The New Atlantis* is a scientist's dream of a scientific paradise.

The New Atlantis

Bacon belongs to literature in spite of himself. He had no expectation of permanent fame except as a philosopher. Literature as an art he scorned and had only a contemptuous regard for the "vanity" of those who "hunt after choiceness of the phrase, and the round and clear composition of the sentence, and the sweet falling of the clauses." He not only did not aim at producing literature, but was strangely indifferent to the literary movements around him. Of the unparalleled poetic richness of his age he seems to have been quite unconscious; although the theater was the center

Indifference to Literature

of intellectual interests, he showed no appreciation of the drama as a social or literary force. He even distrusted the permanency of the language in which Spenser and Shakespeare put their faith, declaring that "these modern languages will one time or the other play the bankrupt with books"; so he wrote his great works in Latin, and the minor ones like the *Essays*, written first in English for contemporary usefulness, he translated into Latin to rescue them from oblivion. But posterity to whom he solemnly committed his "name and memory" reads the *Essays* with perennial interest, and recks not of the "Great Instauration." Such is the irony of fame.

Bacon's example did not at once establish the essay as a form of prose writing. Other experimental forms appeared, one of which was the character sketch, borrowed from the Greek writer Theophrastus. Joseph Hall's *Characters of Virtues and Vices*, at first circulated in manuscript and printed in 1608, is a series of portraits of type characters, such as "The Humble Man," "The Honest Man," "The Profane Man," and "The Flatterer." They are executed in a simple, idiomatic style, and are intended to teach moral lessons. Sir Thomas Overbury's *Characters* are varied and humorous, written with a "quick touch of many strings," says the author, and crammed with witty paradoxes, puns, and pedantic conceits. They contain at least one charming picture, "The Fair and Happy Milkmaid," which Walton remembered when writing his *Complete Angler*. The most interesting example of the Theophrastic form is John Earle's *Microcosmography*, which contains better art and better humor, and treats in a familiar and racy style current types, some of which are still current, such as "A Mere Scholar" and "A Raw Young Preacher." An odd form appeared in Owen Feltham's popular *Resolves*, or moralized essays, each of which ends with a resolution to do or to be what the essay enjoins.

Character Writing

Earle's Microcosmography, 1628. Feltham's Resolves, 1628

The highest development of Elizabethan prose was reached

in Ben Jonson's *Timber*, or *Discoveries Made Upon Men and Matter*. Here we find a direct and natural expression nowhere before seen and approaching close to modern prose. Jonson condemned sharply the labored elegancies of the Elizabethan prose sentence. "Nothing is fashionable," he says, "till it be deformed; and this is to write like a gentleman." The *Discoveries*, varying in length from a brief paragraph to a full essay, consist of notes and reflections flowing naturally from his vast reading. Here is a sample of his sane style and sound criticism:—

Ben Jonson's Timber, 1641

> Talking and eloquence are not the same; to speak and to speak well are two things. A fool may talk, but a wise man speaks; and out of the observation, knowledge, and the use of things, many writers perplex their readers and hearers with mere nonsense. Their writings need sunshine. Pure and neat language I love, yet plain and customary. A barbarous phrase hath often made me out of love with a good sense, and doubtful writing hath wrecked me beyond my patience. . . . The chief virtue of a style is perspicuity, and nothing so vicious in it as to need an interpreter. Words borrowed of antiquity do lend a kind of majesty to style, and are not without their delight sometimes; for they have the authority of years, and out of their intermission do win themselves a kind of gracelike newness. But the eldest of the present, and newest of the past language, is the best.

There was no longer any doubt about the fitness of prose for literary purposes. Scholars continued to make a pedantic display of their learning in Latin and Greek quotations, but the sense of artistic propriety was maturing. The year after Jonson's *Timber* was printed, Sir Thomas Browne's *Religio Medici* appeared, and two years later, Milton's *Areopagitica*, two of the accepted classics of English prose.

PROGRAM OF WORK

CLASS READING. Lyly: *Euphues* (Arber's Reprints). Or selections in Craik, Manly, Chambers, Garnett, Century.

Lodge: *Rosalynde* (Standard Eng. Cl., Shakespeare Classics). Greene's *Pandosto* also may be obtained in the Shakespeare Classics. Selection from Nashe's picaresque tale, *Jack Wilton*,

in Manly, Chambers, vol. I, 330; and from Green's *Groat's Worth of Wit* (the famous assault on Shakespeare), Manly, Chambers, 326.

RALEIGH: *Last Fight of the Revenge* (Arber, Century). Selections from Raleigh's *History*, North's *Plutarch*, Hackluyt's *Voyages*, Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity*, Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, in Chambers, vol. I.

CHAPMAN: *Homer:* Selections in Ward, Bronson, Manly.

BACON: *Essays:* Of Truth, Of Revenge, Of Envy, Of Boldness, Of Great Place, Of Atheism, Of Travel, Of Love, Of Friendship, Of Riches, Of Studies, Of Discourse, Of Nature in Men, Of Ambition, Of Ceremonies and Respects. A careful critical study of these essays should be made. Read the description of the "House of Solomon" in *The New Atlantis*.

EARLE: *Microcosmography* (Arber's Reprints). Jonson's *Timber* (Athenæum Press Series). Selections from Earle, Feltham, Jonson in Craik, Manly, Garnett (*Timber*).

BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM. Church's *Life of Bacon* (E. M. L.); Spedding's *Life and Times of Francis Bacon;* Lee's *Great Englishmen;* Hinchman and Gummere's *Great English Writers;* Macaulay's *Essays;* Whipple's *Age of Elizabeth;* Morley, vol. XI. Annotated editions of the *Essays* in Clarendon Press, Pocket, R. L. S., Maynard, Heath's English Classics.

LITERARY HISTORY. Seccombe and Allen's *Age of Shakespeare*, vol. I; Saintsbury's *Elizabethan Age;* Cambridge, vol. III, chs. xv (Historians), xvi (Prose Fiction), xvii (Marprelate Controversy), xviii (Hooker); vol. IV, chs. i (Translations), iii (Raleigh), xvi (Essays); Symonds's *Shakespeare's Predecessors*, ch. xiii (Euphuism); Jusserand's *English Novel in the Time of Shakespeare;* Ainger's *Lectures and Essays* (Euphuism Past and Present); Morley, vol. VIII, 305–322 (Euphuism); Walton's *Lives* (Hooker); Courthope, vol. II; Chandler's *Literature of Roguery*, ch. v.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION AND RESEARCH

1. Effect of the Renaissance upon English prose. 2. What are the merits, as well as the faults, of Euphuism? 3. Influence of Euphuism in English literature (see Ainger; also *Love's Labor's Lost*, Scott's *Monastery*). 4. Characterize the two styles of Elizabethan fiction. 5. Read and discuss Lodge's *Rosalynde*. 6. Elizabethan method of translating the classics and the modern method; compare passages from Chapman's *Homer* with the same passages in Bryant's translation.

7. Outline of Bacon's public career. 8. Was Bacon's purpose to become rich and powerful in order to be useful to humanity a sincere purpose? Was it wise? 9. Discuss the letter to his uncle (Church, p. 16), in view of his subsequent career. 10. Debate Bacon's treatment of Essex, employing Macaulay for the prosecution and Whipple for the defense. 11. A full account of Bacon's fall (Church, VI). 12. Bacon, the philosopher seeking truth, *versus* Bacon, the Attorney-General seeking the Seals. 13. Bacon's service to the world as a scientist. 14. Bacon's use of rhetorical figures; classical allusions; compact style and abrupt transitions.

15. Compare the essay on Friendship with Emerson's or Thoreau's on the same theme. 16. Compare *The New Atlantis* with More's *Utopia*. 17. Discuss Pope's characterization of Bacon: "The wisest, brightest, meanest of mankind."

18. From the qualities of his character and writings, prove it to have been impossible for Bacon to write the plays of Shakespeare. 19. Write a Theophrastic character sketch. 20. Compare Ben Jonson's prose style with Bacon's.

CHAPTER VIII

THE ELIZABETHAN DRAMA

English drama was born in the church, and through a childhood of several centuries it was nurtured by the church; but finally becoming wayward and unmanageable, it was put out of its religious home, with a heritage of condemnation rather than of parental blessing. During the Middle Ages, the ancient drama of Greece and Rome exerted little or no influence, a mere spark being kept alive here and there by some fond monk or learned nun in the ashes of oblivion that covered all classical literature.

Origin of English Drama

The earliest form of modern drama was the liturgical play, a simple dramatic enlargement of some of the services of the church. In the service of the mass are elements that furnished hints for this dramatic treatment: the priest's symbolic gestures, the reading of the lessons, the chanted prayers and responses of the congregation, the procession, and the interludes of song. As the service was in Latin, it was made more effective for the ignorant German, or French, or English peasant by the use of living pictures, such as the Child in the manger, the adoration of the Magi, and the death of the Saviour. Then appropriate songs and simple dialogues were added to the tableaux, and finally, to obtain the full value of these acted pictures of Biblical story, the vernacular was substituted for Latin. Such dramatic additions to the liturgy were employed especially at Christmas and Easter.

A ritual of the tenth century prepared by St. Ethelwold at Winchester contains one of these little liturgical plays with minute directions for its presentation. It is a part of the Easter service. A rude sepulcher is to be erected near the altar, and used first for the symbolic burial of the cross in the service of Good Friday. Then follow the directions for Easter morning:—

A Liturgical Play

While the third lesson is being chanted, let four brethren vest themselves. Let one of these, vested in an alb, enter as though to take part in the service, and let him approach the sepulcher without attracting attention, and sit there quietly with a palm in his hand. While the third respond is chanted, let the remaining three follow, and let them all, vested in copes, bearing in their hands thuribles with incense, and stepping delicately as those who seek something, approach the sepulcher. When he who sits there beholds them approach him like folk lost and seeking something, let him begin in a dulcet voice of medium pitch to sing—

Quem quæritis in sepulchro, O Christicolæ?
[Whom seek ye in the tomb, O worshipers of Christ?]

Let the three reply in unison—

Jesum Nazarenum crucifixum, O Coelicola.
[Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified, O Heavenly One.]

Then he—

Non est hic, surrexit sicut prædixerat.
Ite, nuntiate quia surrexit a mortuis.
[He is not here, he is risen as he said.
Go ye, announce that he has risen from the tomb.]

At this bidding let the three turn to the choir and say—

Alleluia! resurrexit Dominus.

An anthem is then sung, the three Marys hold up the cloth in which the cross was wrapped, "as if to demonstrate that the Lord has risen," and lay it on the altar. Then the action concludes with the *Te Deum* and the chiming of the bells.

Here we have the drama in embryo, even to the stage directions. It was inevitable that these entertaining and instructive extensions of the liturgy should be elaborated and increased in number. For example, separate speeches were assigned to the Marys, and other characters were added—the disciples Peter and John, and even a spice merchant. Such plays were prepared for many of the church festivals and holy-days, and continued in use from the ninth to the thirteenth century. The people's appetite grew with what it fed on. The audience became too large for the choir of the church, so the play was moved to the nave, then to the graveyard adjoining the church, and then to the village green. When the play was once outside the church, it rapidly threw off the leading-strings of the priests, who had thus far been its only authors and actors, and with many new features passed into the hands of the laity. The plays were now written entirely in the language of the people, with a sprinkling of Latin retained for the sake of sanctity. The authors are unknown. The comic element was introduced, and a familiar realism was employed in the treatment of Bible events, as if they had occurred in Yorkshire. New plays were produced, until the principal scenes and events of the whole Bible history from the Creation and Fall to Doomsday were included, and presented in a consecutive series or cycle. Four such comprehensive cycles, out of many produced in England, have come down to us in a fair state of completion, the *Chester*, *Towneley*, *York*, and *Coventry* collections.

Passing of the Drama from the Church to the Laity

At first the central theme of these religious plays was the mystery of Christ's birth, death, and mission of redemption. Therefore any play taken from the Bible came to be called a Mystery play (French *mystère*), while a play taken from the legends of the saints was called a Miracle play. This distinction was maintained in France, but in England the term "Miracle" was applied indifferently to all religious plays. Also, as one of the most popular occasions

Mystery and Miracle Plays

REPRESENTATION OF A MYSTERY PLAY

for presentation was the great midsummer feast of Corpus Christi, the plays were often called Corpus Christi plays.

The presentation of these plays became the privilege, and duty, of the trade guilds, each guild being responsible for a single play. In the distribution of the plays some regard was shown for appropriateness, the play of Noah and the Building of the Ark, for example, being assigned to the Shipbuilders'

guild, the Last Supper to the Bakers, the Shepherds and the Star to the Chandlers, and the Harrowing of Hell to the Cooks, as best knowing how to get things out of the fire.

Method of Presentation

Each guild had its own "pageant," or stage on wheels, consisting of two stories, the upper for the play and the lower for the dressing-room. Among the stage properties the most prominent was "Hell Mouth," a huge dragon's mouth out of which flames would frequently issue and into which the Devil would disappear with his victims. By skillful manipulation, this instrument was made especially terrifying, as well as edifying, to the simple spectators. Stations were prepared in different parts of the town for the gathering of the people and each pageant in turn appeared at a station, gave its play, and was then wheeled away to the next station. As there were as many as fifty acts, or plays, in some of the Miracle cycles, several days were often occupied in the presentation.

Surviving bills of expenses afford many illuminating details of these spectacles. In one is the entry, "for six skins of white leather for God's garment, 18d," and "for mending of Herod's head, 2s"; and one charge of 3s 4d is for a "yerthe-quake," manifestly a bargain price. Civic pride and guild rivalry naturally tended to improve the acting and increase the magnificence of the shows. At Beverley the Painters were censured by the civic authorities because their play "was badly and confusedly played in contempt of the whole community, before many strangers." A spirit like this was preparing both actors and audiences for the great Elizabethan theaters.

The earliest record of a Miracle play in England is that of the *Ludus de S. Katharina*, written in Latin, or possibly in French, which was acted at Dunstaple about the year 1110. The last guild performance of these plays at Coventry was in 1591, and at Kendal they were given as late as 1612. During these five centuries, especially in the fourteenth and fifteenth, the Miracle play was

Extent and Popularity

the most cherished form of popular amusement and doubtless also the most efficient form of religious instruction. But these entertainments were distinctively a product of the mediæval mind and faded away in the presence of the Renaissance. Moreover, the church became hostile and finally placed upon them the ban of its displeasure and prohibition.

To our sophisticated age these plays seem childish and often inane, but upon unlearned folk with simple faith and free imagination such dramatic pictures of religious history and doctrine could not fail to exert a strong moral and spiritual influence. As literature they are of little value, but as literary history they are of great value and of absorbing interest, for out of these crude exhibitions came, by a natural growth, the plays of Shakespeare. They are written in verse of a haphazard meter, which, though seldom poetry, is often ambitious and sometimes shows a sense of appropriateness in fitting words to theme. In the York cycle as many as twenty-five different meters are attempted. The words of the Bible are turned into rhyme with a simple directness that at times is almost beautiful, as in the prayer of Gethsemane:—

Character of these Plays

> Fader, let this great payn be stylle,
> And pas away fro me;
> Bot not, fader, at my wylle,
> Bot thyn fulfylled be.

The incongruous comic scenes contain the most original strokes, as in these the writers were not hampered by the Bible text. The Second Shepherds' Play, in the *Townley* cycle, is good low comedy, and the episode of Noah's trouble in getting his wife into the Ark is still laughter-provoking:—

> Noe: Dame, as it is skill, here must us abide grace;
> Therfor, wife, with good will com into this place.
> Uxor: Sir, for Jack nor for Gill will I turn my face,
> Till I have on this hill spon a space
> On my rock [distaff].

Lightning and thunder are crashing, halls and bowers are falling, and Noah urges haste:—

> Noe: Therfor, wife, have done; com into ship fast.
> Uxor: Yei, Noe, go cloute thi shone, the better will thai last.

When the water "nighs so near that she sits not dry," Mrs. Noah hies into the ship and Noah addresses the audience philosophically:—

> Ye men that has wifis, whyls they
> are yong,
> If ye luf youre lifis, chastice
> thare tong.

Associated with the Miracle play was the Morality, a play in which the characters are personified abstractions, such as Avarice, Conscience, Sloth, Pity, Nought, Imagination. It was the product of the mediæval love of allegory, and its purpose was thoroughly didactic. At first the theme was generally the struggle between the virtues and vices of human nature for possession of the soul. In *Lusty Juventus*, for example, the hero is instructed in religion by Good Counsel and Knowledge, but falls a victim to Hypocrisy and Abominable Living; finally, however, he is brought to repentance by his first friends, and to a proper abhorrence of Satan. Similar is *The Castle of Perseverance*, in which mankind is personified as Humanum Genus. The hero falls into the hands of Luxuria, but is persuaded by Pœnitentia to commit himself to Confessio, by whom he is conducted to the Castle of Perseverance, where he is protected by the garrison of virtues against the assaults of the vices.

The Moralities

That there is genuine power in these plays, in spite of their apparent dullness, is shown in the remarkable revival in England and America of *Everyman*, which has been worthily called "the flower and crown of the literary species to which it belongs." Everyman, the representative of mankind, is summoned by Death to his last journey. He

Everyman

appeals to his old friends, Jollity, Fellowship, Beauty, Riches, Five Wits, and others, to accompany him, but all refuse save Good Deeds alone, through whose advocacy his soul is received into heaven. Even to-day this simple play, with good acting, possesses the dignity and solemnity of noble tragedy.

A SCENE FROM EVERYMAN AS GIVEN IN 1902

The Moralities represent the second stage of dramatic development. The plots were invented, not transcribed from the Bible, like the Miracles; with the abstract characters were finally mingled characters from real life; and the didactic element was frequently relieved by comic diversions. The Devil was borrowed from the Miracle plays, and an original character, the Vice, was added, as general mischief-maker, appearing with various names, as Iniquity,

The Vice

Fraud, Ambidexter, and Sin. The Vice was intended to represent the inherent evil of man's heart, but his dramatic function was mainly to furnish amusement for the audience by impish jokes and pranks, especially by teasing the Devil, belaboring him with a sword of lath, and finally driving him down to Hell. By gradual modification, the Vice became the clown of Shakespeare's plays.

The transitional character of the Moralities is illustrated by *Kynge Johan*, written by John Bale. This is noteworthy as the first English historical play, in which King John, Stephen Langton, and Cardinal Pandulphus discuss current events with such personages as Sedition, Widow England, Private Wealth, and Usurped Power. The moral purpose of the Moralities was varied in such themes as *The Marriage of Witte and Science*, and became quite pedagogical in *The Nature of the Four Elements*. The tendency to increase the comic and realistic features, and to introduce religious and social satire, as in Skelton's *Magnyfycence*, led naturally to the little comedies known as Interludes, which mark the beginning of the secular drama.

Transitional Forms

The Interlude was never clearly distinguished from the Morality, but gradually the elements of satire, humor, and boisterous fun predominated over the serious features and produced a "new and very mery" type of entertainment, as the titles announced. The name came, doubtless, from the custom of presenting such plays in the intervals of a banquet or other elaborate entertainment in the houses of the nobility. These bright and frolicsome little one-act plays that laughed in audacious scorn of the mediæval sanctities are the germs from which the comedies of Shakespeare and Jonson were developed.

Interludes

The best were written by John Heywood, in the reign of Henry VIII, between 1520 and 1540. Heywood possessed a genuine gift of satiric humor combined with a fair literary sense, indeed was a kind of "Chaucer without his singing robes."

He was an orthodox churchman, but this did not prevent him from lashing recreant church people with his jolly wit. In *The Four P's*, a Palmer, a Pardoner, and a 'Poticary dispute about the efficacy of their respective methods of saving souls, and the Peddler is asked to decide the dispute; he declines and proposes that, as lying is their "comen usage," they engage in a lying contest. The 'Poticary tells a story in flowing verse, quite in the manner of Chaucer's coarser narratives. The Pardoner tells how he recovered the soul of a woman from purgatory, much to the relief of Lucifer. In this the Palmer sees his chance and declares flatly that women are not such shrews, for in his experience with five hundred thousand he has never seen "one woman out of paciens." This overwhelming statement wins the prize, the Peddler deciding "his lye to be most excellent."

John Heywood, 1506?–1565

There is much merriment of a different order in *The Play of the Weather*. In a "parlyment" of the gods the management of the weather is under discussion, and in the manner of modern politics it is decided to refer the question to the "people." The "gentylman" wants dry weather for his hunting; the "gentylwoman" wants less sunshine because it ruins her complexion; the "launder" wants more sunshine to dry his clothes; the water-miller wants rain without wind, the wind-miller wants wind without rain; and the small boy wants "plentie of snow to make my snowballys." Jupiter finds that he must decide the matter himself, and lectures the petitioners upon the error of their selfish ways.

Play of the Weather

In the Interludes and similar farce comedies the drama became completely free from religious authority, and its high purpose of instruction gave place to that of entertainment. One author of a "new enterlude" frankly stated the new point of view, that a play is—

> not worth an oyster shell,
> Except percase it shall fortune to make you laugh well.

The next step of progress was to give artistic qualities to this entertainment. For this, guiding principles, rules, and models of dramatic art were needed, and these were presently found in the classics. The Greek dramatists were too little known in the sixteenth century to be available, but the Latin comedies of Plautus and Terence and the tragedies of Seneca were read everywhere in the schools and colleges, and frequently acted by the students. Also the Italian drama, constructed upon the Latin model, was a fertile source of artistic suggestion. Under these influences the English play was expanded by the invention of systematic and more intricate plots, with a recognized method of construction. The native trend to exuberance and looseness, as seen in the Moralities and Interludes, was restrained. The play was divided into acts and scenes; the wit became more intellectual and polished; the rustic buffoonery was somewhat subdued.

Influence of the Latin Drama

Finally there was an insistent effort to observe the classic rules of the "three unities," derived from Aristotle, namely, the unity of time, of place, and of action. According to these rules, the events of a play must be only such as could occur within a single day; the action must not change from one place to another, as from city to city; and nothing must be included that is inconsistent with the central theme. Events distant in time or place, necessary to an understanding of the plot, must be described by a messenger or chorus, and offensive scenes such as fighting and bloodshed must take place behind the curtain. There was general opposition among scholars to the mingling of comic and serious matters, forming a medley of motives and scenes, a type of play for which the native English taste was already expressing a distinct liking. Sidney protested against the incongruity of "hornpipes and funerals" in the same play, and would have held the growing drama strictly to classical rules. But he failed to recognize the fact that a natural law, the law of daily

The Three Unities

experience, is superior to classic conventions, in the molding of a new form of drama.

The effort to adopt the classic principles is illustrated by *Ralph Royster Doyster*, generally regarded as the earliest regular English comedy. It was written by Nicholas Udall, probably between 1534 and 1541, while he was headmaster of Eton, and was undoubtedly acted by the boys of the school. The play is a careful imitation of Plautus, the principal characters being borrowed directly from the *Miles Gloriosus*. The plot is cleverly devised, and the action is lively and interesting. The characters are the familiar figures of comedy: the vainglorious and cowardly hero, the mischief-making friend who dupes the hero and uses him as his "chiefe banker both for meate and money," the desirable widow, the accommodating old nurse, and sprightly maids who fight as lustily as they sing. It is written in rambling Alexandrines, rhymed in couplets. Although the technique is classic, the atmosphere and substance of the play are thoroughly English.

Ralph Royster Doyster

The second English comedy is *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, acted at Cambridge in 1560. It has been generally attributed to John Still, master of Trinity College, but is now more accurately assigned to a William Stevenson. This play observes the Latin form of structure, but otherwise is extremely English. It presents the life of a country village, with a vigorous realism so coarse and unrestrained as to obscure for modern ears the genuine humor of the play. The mainspring of the plot is Diccon the Bedlam, an elaboration of the Vice, who by his mischievous tricks gets the whole neighborhood into a quarrel. Gammer loses her needle while chasing the cat away from the milk-pan, and in the end finds it sticking in the seat of her man Hodge's breeches. Between these two important events there is a deal of boisterous wrangling, in which everybody is accused of stealing, and even the parson gets a good cudgeling by mistake. This

Gammer Gurton's Needle

"ryght pithy, pleasaunt and merrie comedie," as the title-page describes it, is the beginning of domestic drama, vulgar and redolent of barn-yards, but original and true.

English comedy was a natural development, through the transitional Interlude, from the popular Miracle and Morality plays. Though influenced by the classics in matters of form and style, it was essentially a growth from the native soil. English tragedy, on the other hand, was an imported plant from the Latin of Seneca, and reached a thrifty growth only after much grafting and pruning and adapting to the new climate and soil. The first tragedy is *Gorboduc*, written by Thomas Norton and Thomas Sackville and acted before Elizabeth in 1562. The story is from the legendary history of England. King Gorboduc, in the manner of King Lear, divides his kingdom between his two sons, Ferrex and Porrex. This mistake leads to the murder of the elder son by the younger, the murder of the younger by the Queen, the rebellion of the people and death of King and Queen, and finally political chaos due to the empty throne. The treatment of the theme follows closely the Senecan model of tragedy, except that the unities of time and place are not strictly observed. There are long speeches with no action; a "Nuntius" describes the horrors that occur behind the scenes, and a Chorus, in the manner of the Greek tragedies, comments sagely between the acts. Sidney described the play correctly as "full of stately speeches and well-sounding phrases, clyming to the hight of Seneca his stile." An original feature was the "dumb show," a symbolic pantomime at the beginning of each act, intended to aid in interpreting the plot,—a device that continued to be frequently employed in the Elizabethan drama. The play is most famous for the introduction of blank verse, an instrument to which our dramatic literature owes much of its strength and nobility of expression. Although an experiment, the verse of *Gorboduc* is remarkably smooth and regular, and was not improved until

The First English Tragedy

the appearance of Marlowe's "mighty line" twenty-five years later.

For nearly a generation this type of tragedy was diligently cultivated by scholars in the universities and at court. *The Misfortunes of Arthur*, presented before the Queen in 1587 by eight members of Gray's Inn, one of whom was Francis Bacon, shows no change of dramatic theory. There is the same recital of events by messenger and chorus in place of action, the same shedding of blood in quantities without a drop appearing on the stage. But the effort to transplant the Senecan tragedy was a failure. It made its contribution and disappeared. English playwrights obtained from Seneca and his disciples the ghost, the chorus, the revenge motive, and sensational crimes in the plot; and especially they obtained a sense of literary form and dignity. In the feature of sensationalism there was a possibility of satisfying the English love of realistic excitement, the conflict of passions in rapid dialogue, and the clash of arms in battle. Only six years after *Gorboduc*, the author of *Gismond of Salerne*, disregarding the prohibition of visible horrors, permitted his heroine to die before the audience and brought upon the stage the bleeding heart of the hero.

The Influence of Seneca

But it was Thomas Kyd who first perceived the full possibilities of this sensational feature, and with the appearance of the amazing *Spanish Tragedy* in 1587 English tragedy leaped at a single bound from its academic and imitative state to an equal rank with comedy in popular favor. With the astonishing success of this play and of the still more startling *Tamburlaine* of Christopher Marlowe, which appeared the same year, a new school of tragic writing was established and a new era of dramatic history was opened.

A New Dramatic Era, 1587

The crowning glory of Elizabethan literature is its drama, which for extent, variety, exuberance of thought, depth of passion, and splendor of imaginative power is unsurpassed in

the literature of the world. From about 1580 the drama took precedence over all other forms of literary expression. Within fifty years fifty dramatic poets appeared. Intellectual interests were centered in the theater. In a far-reaching sense the actor became "the abstract and brief chronicle of the time." Not only the life of the age but the life of all humanity was acted upon the stage. The playwright's themes were taken from the most glorious actions of the world's heroes and from the comic and tragic medley of daily life. Although universal in its embodiment of human experience, the Elizabethan drama was thoroughly national; and this accounts in large measure for its marvelous development. All classes were drawn to the theater to see themselves portrayed. Plays were written for the "groundlings" as much as for the great people of the court. So long as the national life under Elizabeth's rule flowed in a single deep stream, the drama represented the highest reach of creative imagination; when the stream of national life was divided by political and religious dissensions in the succeeding reign, the drama steadily declined.

Full Development of the Drama

The life of Elizabethan England was itself dramatic, and the drama in its variety, complexity, and fluency of forms was a direct expression of the tumultuous passions and energies of this life. The Greek drama was limited to clear and consistent outlines under the restraint of recognized principles of art. The first impression of Elizabethan drama is that of lawlessness and confusion. It is vast, extravagant, spontaneous, and reckless of restraint; chaotic in respect to art, but tremendously energetic in experimenting with new forms of art. It is a great national art in the process of germination, brought finally by Shakespeare to full and perfect bloom.

Character of the Drama

Two broad principles were in conflict, classicism and romanticism, and the victory was won for romantic drama. The classical ideal is realized in method, simplicity, proportion, and

spiritual repose; the romantic ideal is realized in energy, complexity, freedom, spiritual unrest, and aspiration. The symbol of the classic spirit is the Greek temple, and the symbol of the romantic spirit is the Gothic cathedral. Greek drama is calm and dignified, and limited in its presentation of character. The essence of romantic drama is action. It aims to reveal and develop character by action, and it aims to present human character in its fullness and variety.

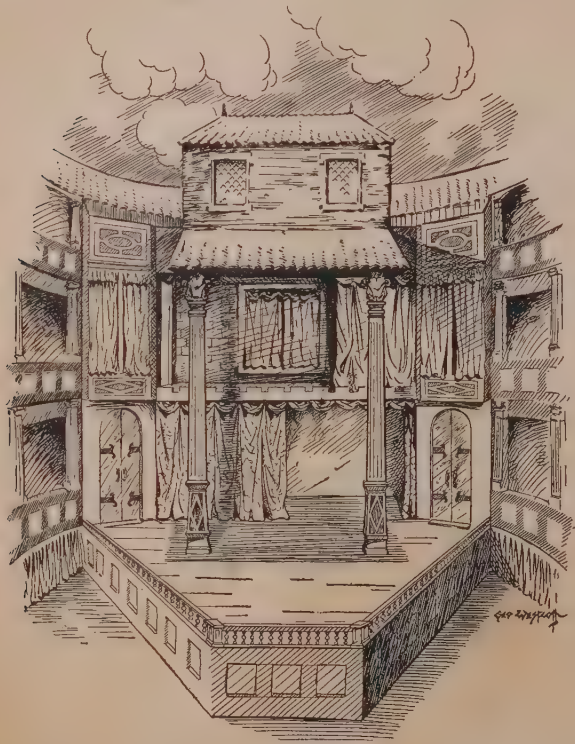
Classic and Romantic Ideals

Incongruity was the normal order of this new drama. The ancient "unities," venerated in Italy and France, were ignored. The time of a play might extend through the life of a hero, and the place might change with every scene. History and geography were not allowed to hamper the plot. The courts of Olympus and Whitehall mingled in the same play; pagan philosophers and Christian saints, nobleman and clown, Titania and Bottom, jostled each other on the same stage. Any playwright who could furnish a new sensation was sure to be "most tyrannically clapped for it," like the boy players of whom Shakespeare complained in *Hamlet*. Polonius's recipe for drama, "tragical—comical—historical—pastoral," was an acceptable mixture. In close touch with grace and beauty was much coarseness and vulgarity, though generally of the frank and wholesome kind. In the life of the period passion largely ruled conduct and the appetites were unchastened. The nerve fiber of audiences was tough. Stage horrors were relished—slashing swords, flowing blood, heaps of the dead, any wild tempest of passion and destruction—relieved, however, by occasional "lyrical interbreathings," a child's tender voice, a woman's prayer, or a careless song. But out of all this strange jumble of discordant motives new laws of dramatic art were evolved, laws more fully in harmony with nature and the truth of human experience than any conceived by the ancients.

Incongruous Mixture of Romantic Drama

The earliest theaters were the inclosed courts of the inns,

which suggested the form of construction for the regular theaters. Also the great dining-halls of the colleges, the Inns of Court, and the royal palaces were much used for private



THE ELIZABETHAN STAGE

Reproduced from Victor E. Albright's *The Shakespearian Stage*, by courtesy of the Author

plays. In 1576 The Theater and The Curtain were built in Shoreditch, and later the famous Globe and others were built on the Thames bank in Southwark. Puritan hostility long

kept the theaters outside the city limits. The central part of the theater, the pit, was open to the sky, like the inn-yard; here the "groundlings" obtained for a penny the privilege of standing room, including the inclemencies of weather. The pit was surrounded by two roofed galleries, divided into "rooms," or boxes with seats. The stage was a bare platform extending far into the pit. It consisted of three parts, a front and back part that might be separated by a curtain, and a balcony in the rear that served many convenient purposes, as the "outward walls" of Macbeth's castle or Juliet's window. There was no scenery, in the modern sense of the term, and the stage properties were of the rudest kind; a few pasteboard rocks and trees made the seashore of Prospero's island or the Forest of Arden. A wooden frame with a name in large letters served as a city gate and indicated the place of the scene. It was customary to allow the young gallants, for an extra fee, to sit upon the stage, where they enjoyed the privilege of carping at the actors and the "groundlings" in the pit.

The Elizabethan Theater

Plays were given only in the daytime. All women's parts were acted by boys and men before 1660, although it was not thought improper for women to appear in plays and masques presented at court. The costumes were elaborate and expensive, but were selected without regard for historic propriety. King David and Macbeth alike wore the fashionable doublet, ruff, and trunk hose of an Elizabethan gentleman. The acting was good — probably often of great excellence, and received a warm response from the audiences, made more attentive and imaginative by the lack of scenery. The actor had no recognized position in society, since his profession was new, and in 1572 he was classed by law with "vagabonds." So all reputable actors were organized in companies under noble patronage, like the minstrel troupes of an earlier period. The most famous of these companies was the Earl of Leicester's Players, later known as the Lord Cham-

The Actors

berlain's, and finally, with the accession of James, as the King's Players. With this company Shakespeare was associated as actor and playwright. Between the accession of Elizabeth, 1558, and the closing of the theaters, 1642, there were in London as many as twenty theaters and inn-yards used as theaters, and more than twenty theatrical companies.

Shakespeare's Predecessors

The immediate predecessors of Shakespeare, the adventurous pioneers from whom he obtained his first lessons and disciplinary experience, were Lyly, Peele, Greene, Lodge, Kyd, and Marlowe. All essential elements of romantic drama were used experimentally by these poets, and from them were passed on to be expanded and exalted by Shakespeare. He caught their flaming spirit of creative enthusiasm; he accepted the technique of the drama as they had devised it; and he borrowed liberally from their work—too liberally, according to the jealous Greene, who in a dying address to his fellows warned them against "an upstart crow beautified with our feathers, that supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blank verse as the best of you." Certain it is that upon the product of their versatile talents as a foundation Shakespeare built his splendid achievement. Their silver mintage his genius transmuted to gold.

Shakespeare's Teachers

John Lyly, the first creative dramatic artist, produced comedies of elaborate compliment for the court, establishing a species of Court Comedy that was as original, and became as fashionable for the time, as his *Euphues*. In these plays Elizabeth and other great people are vaguely described, often in the guise of mythological characters. The sentiment is pale and passionless as moonlight, and the expression smooth and graceful as deliberate flattery. *Campaspe*, acted before the Queen in 1584, presents the court of Alexander, with Plato, Aristotle, Diogenes, and the artist Apelles, all speaking in elegant eu-

phuism. *Sapho and Phao* deals in a puzzling way with the matrimonial triflings of Elizabeth with the Duc d'Alençon. *Midas* is Philip II of Spain, and *Endymion*, Lyly's most celebrated play, is a tactful and delicate treatment of the relation between Elizabeth and Leicester. In these plays Lyly used prose, heavily ornamented with euphuistic conceits and ingenious witticisms, but also graceful and rhythmic; and by his success he established prose as the language of comedy. He proved its peculiar fitness for sparkling dialogue and the smart "quip," which one of his characters defines as "a short saying for a sharp wit, with a bitter sense in a sweet word." He did much to educate audiences in a nice sense of choice phrases, neatness of expression, and refinement of subject-matter, substituting grace and delicacy for boisterousness, and thus pointing the way to high comedy as realized in *As You Like It*.

John Lyly, 1554?–1606

George Peele addressed the lingering taste for the once popular scripture plays in his *David and Bethsabe*, a modern Miracle play, glowing with an Oriental splendor of rhetoric, yet showing the imagination of a real poet in lines like David's praise of Absalom:—

George Peele, 1558?–1597?

> Friend him with deeds, and touch no hair of him,
> Not that fair hair with which the wanton winds
> Delight to play, and love to make it curl,
> Wherein the nightingales would build their nests,
> And make sweet bowers in every golden tress,
> To sing their lover every night asleep.

The passage also illustrates the progress that blank verse was making. Peele's *Chronicle of Edward I* illustrates the transition from the clumsy chronicle history of the type of Bale's *Kynge Johan* to the historical plays of Shakespeare. Peele, like others of this group of "university wits," was inclined to follow the classical precedents; but the tumultuous native impulse toward romanticism soon overcame all restraints of academic criticism. His fantastic *Old Wives' Tale* is a good-natured satire on

the romantic extravagancies into which the drama was running. This play is distinguished as the source from which Milton obtained the plot of *Comus*.

Robert Greene presented in *Orlando Furioso* the full-blown type of the heroic play, the type toward which the chief romantic tendencies were converging. The cast contains, in addition to the hero of Ariosto's epic, the Emperor of Africa, the Soldan of Egypt, Kings of Cuba, Mexico, and "the Isles," and twelve Peers of France, all of whom discourse in a lofty manner more than befitting their lofty stations, with a plentiful sprinkling of Latin and Italian quotations in their English speech. Orlando, in the gorgeous rhetoric of the approved heroic style, thus announces that the sun has risen:—

Robert Greene, 1560?–1592

> Why, sluggard, seest thou not Lycaon's son,
> The hardy plow-swain unto mighty Jove,
> Hath traced his silver furrows in the heavens,
> And turning home his over-watched team,
> Gives leave unto Apollo's chariot?

Greene's *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* is an interesting mixture of pretty pastoral scenes, uncanny scenes with Bacon the magician, and comic scenes with the Friar's servant Miles, who inherits the functions of the old Vice. All are cleverly pieced together in the manner not so much of drama as of story-telling, for which the author's talent was better suited. There is a special charm in the character of fair Margaret of Tresingham, one of the first appearances in English drama of a womanly woman. *A Looking-Glass for London and England*, written jointly with Thomas Lodge, is a late survival of the Morality. It rehearses the history of Jonah's experiences with the sins of Nineveh; and the prophet Hosea, performing the office of chorus, applies the moral to London, whose "riot, pride, and sumptuous cheer" threaten to bring her to the destruction that overwhelmed the Ninevites

A Late Morality Play

Lodge had "his oare in every paper boat," but his versatile fancy was best employed with romances and lyrics.

The English relish for "tragedies of blood" was established by Thomas Kyd's remarkable *Spanish Tragedy*, and continued undiminished for seventy years. Gradually, however, the taste for lurid sensationalism was improved and elevated to the ideal of tragedy exemplified in *Macbeth* and *Hamlet*. In the *Spanish Tragedy* there is no portrayal of character, no shading of thought or of profound feeling, only a succession of bloody scenes, enacted in a mad fury of revenge, that keep the audience gasping at grisly horrors. Ten of the main characters are dead at the end. No other play of the age is so frequently alluded to in contemporary literature. It was revised again and again and long held the stage in spite of the ridicule of saner poets. Its influence is found in the gruesome *Titus Andronicus*, second to it in immediate popularity, which is so repellent to modern taste that critics admit it unwillingly among Shakespeare's plays.

Kyd's Spanish Tragedy

The only one of these dramatists worthy of comparison with Shakespeare is Christopher Marlowe, whom the poet Swinburne declares to be "the greatest discoverer, the most daring and inspired pioneer in all our poetic literature." More than all others he pointed out to Shakespeare the true road to follow. What he created, Shakespeare perfected.

The son of a shoemaker of Canterbury, Marlowe was born in the shadow of the great cathedral in 1564, two months before Shakespeare's birth. He was educated at the King's School in his native town and at Cambridge, where he obtained the Bachelor's degree in 1583. He then, apparently—for little that is definite is known of him—became a literary adventurer in London. In 1593, at the age of twenty-nine, he was killed in a tavern brawl. During the last five years of his stormy life he wrote four remarkable plays, all throbbing with the passionate fervor

Christopher Marlowe, 1564–1593

of a strange and exultant genius,—*Tamburlaine the Great, The Jew of Malta, Doctor Faustus*, and *Edward II*.

The Spirit of Marlowe's Plays

In the opening lines of *Tamburlaine*, with youthful audacity, Marlowe defied the traditions and the current taste for "jigging veins of rhyming mother wits," and with the "high astounding terms" of his Scythian conqueror "transformed," says Schelling, "as at the stroke of a magician's wand, the dramatic poetry of a whole nation." But this spirit of revolt was not so much a literary conviction as an innate quality of his being. Like Byron, he is the one hero of his work. It is his own soul that he describes in Tamburlaine's words:—

> Our souls, whose faculties can comprehend
> The wondrous architecture of the world,
> And measure every wandering planet's course,
> Still climbing after knowledge infinite,
> And always moving as the restless spheres,
> Will us to wear ourselves, and never rest.

Marlowe's climbing soul would grasp the infinite and rule like a god, and it finds a wild joy in the vehement pursuit of the unattainable. His heroes are consumed by a thirst for power. Tamburlaine thirsts for unbounded domain, and like a barbaric Napoleon sweeps the whole East with his conquests, to find at last only that—

> Tamburlaine, the scourge of God, must die.

In *Doctor Faustus*, the ardent Faustus thirsts for knowledge—

> Of all things that move between the quiet poles.

He wants the power to "resolve all ambiguities" of time and space, to be a "conjurer laureate," with skill even to summon from the shades the beautiful Helen—

> the face that launched a thousand ships
> And burnt the topless towers of Ilium.

And for a brief enjoyment of these vast privileges he sells his soul to the Devil. In *The Jew of Malta*, Barabas thirsts for riches, yearning to be like—

> The wealthy Moor, that in the Eastern rocks
> Without control can pick his riches up,
> And in his house heap pearls like pebble-stones.

To compass his desires and wreak vengeance on those who thwart them, he engages in a riot of fiendish crime, coming to his death by an infernal machine contrived for his enemies.

The Jew of Malta

A comparison of Barabas with Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice* shows how Marlowe's rough-hewn dramatic sculptures were perfected by the more subtle and mature art of Shakespeare. The historical tragedy *Edward II* is Marlowe's most measured and artistic play, rivaling Shakespeare's *Richard II*, for which it served as model. The scene of the King's death, says Charles Lamb, "moves pity and terror beyond any scene ancient or modern with which I am acquainted."

The gigantic spirit of Marlowe is fittingly embodied in his tumultuous language. His style is a mixture of blood, rapture, and superlatives. The gorgeous rhetoric, the easy command of the rich resources of classic lore, the music and majesty of his blank verse, the heat and splendor of his imagination, astounded the age and still excite our wonder and compel our admiration. The extravagancies would be grotesque but for the genuineness of youthful ecstacy that they reveal; and then, too, Marlowe lacked a sense of humor. Tamburlaine always speaks in tones of rolling thunder. He comes upon the stage in a chariot drawn by two conquered kings with bits in their mouths:—

A Style of Power and Extravagance

> Holla, ye pampered jades of Asia!
> What! can ye draw but twenty miles a day,
> And have so proud a chariot at your heels,
> And such a coachman as great Tamburlaine.

Even when Marlowe's imagination is riding the whirlwind, there are flashes of poetic beauty that rescue his high-sounding diction from the perils of bombast:—

> Through the streets with troops of conquered kings,
> I'll ride in golden armor like the sun,
> And in my helm a triple plume shall spring,
> Spangled with diamonds, dancing in the air,
> To note me emperor of the threefold world.

Marlowe's plays are not "magnificent failures," but magnificent promises of a young poet who with prolonged opportunity might have divided the throne with Shakespeare. His specific contribution to the developing drama was large. His genius was in full sympathy with the native romantic spirit, and he proved the wisdom of the break from classical guidance in English tragedy. He gave to the drama the force and passion of living personality and deepened its spiritual interest. Most important of all, he gave it a suitable instrument of poetic expression. He transformed the crude blank verse of *Gorboduc*, lengthened its cadences, smoothed its rhythm, gave to it flexibility and variety, and a stately music that has ever since been the supreme quality of this form of English poetry.

His Contribution to Dramatic Art

We must not forget the many dainty lyrics with which these poets decorated their plays; in reality they were better poets than playwrights, and of the art of song they had achieved the mastery. Unsurpassed for lyric charm are such gems as Lyly's—

Lyrical Gift of these Poets

> Cupid and Campaspe played
> At cards for kisses,—Cupid paid.

And Peele's—

> Fair and fair, and twice so fair,
> As fair as any may be.

And Greene's—

> Ah, what is love? It is a pretty thing,
> As sweet unto a shepherd as a king.

And Marlowe's song of *The Passionate Shepherd to his Love*, that is the very essence of pure fancy and melodious artlessness. The poet that might have been is seen also in Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*, a frankly pagan celebration of beauty like the youthful *Venus and Adonis* of Shakespeare, which it even surpasses in the spontaneous melody of narrative verse. But it is a fragment, and symbolic of the fate of its author, stricken to silence in the very beginning of his flight of song.

PROGRAM OF WORK

CLASS READING. Miracle Plays: *The Play of Noah's Flood; The Sacrifice of Isaac; The Second Shepherds' Play* (Pollard, Manly). Moralities: *Everyman* (Pollard, Cl. Press, Everyman's Library); parts of *Witte and Science*, and of Bale's *Kynge Johan* (Pollard, Manly). Or *Hicke-Scorner* (Morley, Manly).
Interludes: *The Four P's* (Symonds's *Shakespeare's Predecessors*, 188–201, Manly, Morley).
Ralph Royster Doyster (Arber, Morley, Manly, Oxford Treasury).
Gorboduc (Manly, Oxford Tr., Morley, Everyman's).
Lyly: *Endymion* (English Readings, Neilson), or *Campaspe* (Manly).
Kyd: *The Spanish Tragedy* (Manly, Temple Dramatists, Neilson).
Marlowe: *Doctor Faustus; Tamburlaine* (Masterpieces of English Drama, Morley, Neilson, Temple; selections in Cl. Press, Oxford, Williams, Lamb).

AVAILABLE TEXTS. Pollard's *English Miracle Plays, Moralities, and Interludes;* Manly's *Specimens of Pre-Shakespearian Drama;* Smith's *York Plays;* Gayley's *Representative English Comedies; Oxford Treasury of English Literature;* Neilson's *Chief Elizabethan Dramatists;* Thayer's *Best Elizabethan Plays;* Morley's *English Plays;* Williams's *Specimens of Elizabethan Drama;* Charles Lamb's *Specimens of English Dramatic Poets.*

LITERARY HISTORY. Ward's *History of English Dramatic Literature;* Symonds's *Shakespeare's Predecessors;* Cambridge, vol. v; Seccombe and Allen's *Age of Shakespeare*, vol. ii; Snell's *Age of Transition*, vol. ii; Schelling's *Elizabethan Drama;* Schelling's *English Chronicle Play;* Gayley's *Plays of our Fathers;* Chambers's *The Mediæval Stage*, vol. ii; Morley, vol. x; Bates's *English Religious Drama;* Courthope, vol. ii, ch. xi; Thorndike's *Tragedy;* Gayley's *Representative English Comedies* (Introduction); Brooke's *The Tudor Drama;* MacKenzie's *The English Morali-*

ties; Dowden's *Transcripts and Studies* (Marlowe); Verity's *Marlowe's Influence on Shakespeare;* Matthews's *Shakespeare as a Playwright*, ch. ii; Lee's *Shakespeare and the Modern Stage*, 38–46; Albright's *Shakespearian Stage;* Thorndike's *Shakespeare's Theater.*

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION AND RESEARCH

1. Make a clear and concise statement of the successive stages in the development of English drama before Shakespeare. 2. The Miracle play as a means of religious instruction. 3. Methods of presenting the Miracle plays (consult Ward, Symonds, Pollard, or Chambers). 4. Origin and character of the Interlude (Chambers, vol. II, ch. xxiv; Brooke, ch. iii). 5. Distinguish between Moralities and Interludes. 6. Read and discuss *Everyman.*

7. Trace the successive steps in the development of comedy. 8. Point out the native English elements in the first comedies. 9. Origin of Shakespeare's clowns. 10. The blank verse of *Gorboduc;* compare it with Surrey's, Marlowe's, and Shakespeare's. 11. Explain clearly and illustrate the "three unities" of the classic stage. 12. Distinguish carefully the classic and the romantic types of drama.

13. A realistic picture of the Elizabethan theater, with sketch of the interior (Schelling, vol. I, ch. iv). 14. Stage properties, actors, and costumes (Matthews, Lee, Schelling). 15. Character and influence of Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy.* 16. Lyly's contribution to dramatic expression. 17. Compare Marlowe's *Jew of Malta* with Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice.* 18. Compare *Doctor Faustus* with Goethe's *Faust* (Morley's Universal Library; or Taylor's translation; or Ward's edition of the two plays in Cl. Press). 19. Select passages of high poetic merit in *Tamburlaine.* 20. Justify by illustration Ben Jonson's phrase, "Marlowe's mighty line." 21. Discuss the statement of Symonds: "The intellectual movement to which we give the name of Renaissance expressed itself in England mainly through the drama" (see *Predecessors of Shakespeare*, ch. ii).

CHAPTER IX

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

1564–1616

English drama reached its climax in the work of Shakespeare; all that preceded him indicates progress, and all that followed him for two hundred years indicates decline. He lived and wrote in the midst of a brilliant throng of dramatists, mingling in the same experiences and breathing the same inspiring air; but like some snow-capped Alp that thrusts its glittering peak far into the higher heavens, Shakespeare towers above his aspiring companions in unapproachable magnificence. Yet his lofty station was unrecognized. As the shepherds of Admetus knew not Apollo in their midst, the age of Elizabeth knew not that it was entertained by a god.

An Unknown Personality

The known facts of Shakespeare's life are few and insignificant. The greatest poet in our literature has the briefest biography. Examination of all available contemporary evidence, with painful minuteness, has resulted only in a large accumulation of conjectures and probabilities, and in countless biographies of the man that Shakespeare may have been. But the wonder-worker of the plays still stands in the shadowy background, a silent figure cloaked in impenetrable mystery. The poet we know; the man is hidden in the light of the poet's thought. A few dates in the parish register, a few legal documents connected with the purchase of land, and a few allusions by associates in London are all that is actually recorded of Shakespeare outside his

works; and as dramatic writing is objective and essentially impersonal, it is not safe to assume that his voice is heard in that of any one of his characters.

William Shakespeare was born in 1564 in Stratford-on-Avon, in the beautiful county of Warwickshire, the "heart of England." He was baptized April 26, and since it was customary to baptize a child three days after birth, April 23 is accepted as his birthday. His father, John Shakespeare, was a fairly prosperous tradesman, and a man of some distinction, for he held various offices; he was ale-taster, burgess, borough chamberlain, bailiff, and

Birth and Parentage

THE BIRTHPLACE OF SHAKESPEARE

chief alderman. His education was presumably limited, for when signing legal documents he often made his mark, but there is evidence that he could write. The mother, Mary Arden, was the daughter of a wealthy farmer and brought to her husband a considerable inheritance. She could not write her name.

It is assumed that the young Shakespeare attended the

Grammar School of Stratford, because that was the natural thing to do. The quaint old building may yet be seen in which he learned the "small Latin and less Greek" credited to him by his friend Ben Jonson. The usual school course included the principal Latin authors, with rhetoric and logic, and possibly a smattering of Greek. Later he must have acquired a reading knowledge of French and Italian. It is the opinion of Churton Collins, based upon minute examination of his works, that "he could almost certainly read Latin with as much facility as a cultivated Englishman of our own times reads French." And yet he was not a scholar, but knew how to appropriate the finest fruits of scholarship. He was evidently as contemptuous of mediæval scholarship, especially formal logic, as was Bacon. A servant of the house of Capulet thus syllogizes: "To move is to stir; and to be valiant is to stand; therefore if thou art moved, thou run'st away." Thus Shakespeare merrily jibed at the learned pedants with his gentle satire. There are undoubtedly reminiscences of the Stratford schoolmasters in the characters of Holofernes, Pinch, and Sir Hugh Evans.

Education

A larger part of Shakespeare's early education was obtained from his native surroundings. The life of Warwickshire is fully reproduced in his plays. He was a keen observer, sensitive to the beauty of woods and fields, and interested in every aspect of the life of the common people. In his boyhood he was acquainted with the blacksmith in *King John*, and saw the sheep-shearing in *The Winter's Tale*, and at some peasant's hearth first heard Mercutio's description of Queen Mab and other homely folk-lore. We may be sure that he often noted, like Banquo, the habits of the swallows in building their "pendent bed" in some "coign of vantage," and was stirred by gentle thoughts, like Duke Orsino, when listening to the murmuring wind

Education of Environment

> That breathes upon a bank of violets,
> Stealing and giving odor, .

He learned the good points of a horse, of a foxhound, and of a hunting-hawk. In his father's garden undoubtedly grew all of Perdita's sweet herbs and flowers—

> Hot lavender, mints, savory, marjoram,
> The marigold, that goes to bed wi' the sun.

It is said that every flower mentioned in the plays may be found in or near Stratford. Warwickshire was rich in historic

ANNE HATHAWAY'S COTTAGE

and romantic lore. Near Shakespeare's home were the grand castles of Warwick and Kenilworth, centers of the pomp and pageantry and bloody conflicts of feudalism. He was eleven years old when Leicester entertained Elizabeth at Kenilworth, in 1575, and it is quite likely that the eager-minded boy and his father were in the crowd of country folk that gathered to see the wonderful revelries of that occasion.

At about the age of fourteen young Shakespeare was probably withdrawn from school to assist his father, who developed

a weakness for lawsuits and otherwise fell into financial difficulties. Tradition says that William became a butcher's apprentice, and that he was a schoolmaster, but tradition is a poor historian. At eighteen he was married to Anne Hathaway, a woman eight years his senior. From certain passages in his poetry it has been argued that the marriage was unhappy, but the satirical jest about the marriage bond is a common topic of literature and proves nothing; moreover, quite as many passages in his poetry celebrating the felicity of domestic life are as applicable to his own home life. In 1583 a daughter Susanna was baptized, and two years later the baptism of the twins, Hammet and Judith, is recorded.

Marriage

Beyond these few facts practically nothing is known about Shakespeare from the date of his baptism to the time when he is first heard of, in 1592, as a successful dramatist in London. But the empty space has been filled with all sorts of legends and conjectures. It is said, for instance, that his remarkable knowledge of legal terms shows that he was a lawyer's clerk; but on the same kind of evidence he might be entered in almost any of the professions. A tradition which has a truthful look on its face relates that he was prosecuted for deer-stealing by Sir Thomas Lucy of Charlecote, near Stratford, and that, having written a satirical ballad on Sir Thomas in revenge, he was obliged to flee the country to escape the knight's wrath. Into the story is even woven the detail that he was "oft whipt and sometimes imprisoned." There is some confirmation of the story in the character of Justice Shallow, who appears in *Henry IV* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor* with the "dozen white luces" on his coat, an allusion to the Lucy coat of arms. But all legends of Shakespeare's youth arose a hundred or more years after his death and are subject to the usual discount on country gossip. Certain it is, however, that about 1585 or 1587 he disappeared from Stratford and saw little of it for the next eleven years.

A Biography of Traditions and Conjectures

In his youth Shakespeare must have seen rustic dramatic performances like the Robin Hood Plays, the St. George Play, the Morris Dances, and other "Whitsun pastorals," as Perdita calls them, and perhaps Miracle plays, which were presented at Coventry well far away, as late as 1591. And bands of strolling players certainly visited Stratford. From such sources he may have received his first dramatic impulse, and it is a warrantable supposition that in London he quickly found employment at the theaters—whether at first as a holder of gentlemen's horses or as a call-boy behind the scenes, according to the traditions, does not matter. Certainly within the period of about seven years he became an acknowledged rival of the brilliant "university wits." Drama was now the grand sport of the town. The audiences craved new sensations; a play could run only a few days at a time, and the cleverest authors were taxed to meet the demand. Old plays were furbished up to appear new, and in this work of patching and remaking anything that had the promise of entertainment in it, Shakespeare won his first fame. "An absolute Johannes factotum," a Jack of all trades, the sour Greene called him, and a skillful one he was indeed. He now learned his trade in all its parts, and with practical business thrift laid the foundation of his career.

Dramatic Education and Experience

During these years also he presumably supplemented his grammar-school education with wide reading. He was evidently a swift and unscholarly reader, who seized what was of immediate value and easily absorbed spirit and color from great books, such as the poems of Chaucer and Gower, the stories of Malory and the old chronicles. He knew the works of his contemporaries well. With one of them, Marlowe, some think he collaborated in his early play-writing; but two such flaming spirits could hardly have worked together in harmony. To Marlowe he was most indebted, and to him he paid the gracious compliment of direct quotation in *As You Like It:*—

Knowledge of Books

Dead Shepherd, now I find thy saw of might,
"Who ever loved that loved not at first sight."

Three contemporary books were of supreme service to him, Holinshed's *Chronicle*, North's *Plutarch*, and Painter's *Palace of Pleasure*, a collection of the choicest Italian novels from which much of the material for the comedies was obtained. His knowledge of the Bible seems to have been acquired from the current phrases of daily speech, rather than from any studious reading.

With that unrecognized literature of the people—songs, ballads, and proverbs—he was amazingly familiar. The life of the common people was his most serious study. In the London taverns he found the great book of human nature always open, with vivid illustrations on every page; at the famous Mermaid in Bread Street where "many were the wit-combats betwixt him and Ben Jonson," as Fuller testifies, or at the Boar's Head in Eastcheap, where Falstaff and Prince Hal clinked the pewter "with any tinker in his own language." The field of Shakespeare's personal experience was limited, for there is no proof that he was ever outside of England, but adventurers surely brought to these tavern companies strange tales from all parts of the world.

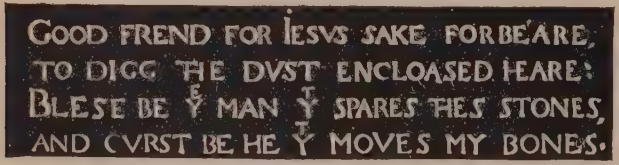
Knowledge of the People

Shakespeare's career in London probably extended from 1585 to 1611. During these twenty-six years he wrote his plays, became an actor, manager of the leading dramatic company, part owner of the Globe and Blackfriars theaters, and from these several sources acquired a comfortable fortune. As an actor he was "excellent in the qualitie he professes," says a contemporary, and tradition says that he acted the Ghost in *Hamlet* and old Adam in *As You Like It*. In 1597 he purchased New Place, the finest residence in Stratford, and added later large purchases of land. In 1607 his daughter Susanna was married to John Hall, a physician of some eminence; their only child, Elizabeth, lived to be Shakespeare's last lineal descendant.

Career as Actor and Manager

From stray bits of evidence it is believed that he retired from the stage in 1611 and settled permanently in his native town to enjoy the life of a country gentleman. A coat of arms for the family had already been obtained in his father's name, which entitled him to be described as "of Stratford-on-Avon, Gentleman." In March, 1616, his will was signed, by which he left gifts for three of his fellow actors and to his wife his "second best bed." About this time he entertained his friends Drayton and Ben Jonson at New Place, and they "had a merry meeting," according to

Retirement and Death


GOOD FREND FOR IESVS SAKE FORBEARE,
TO DIGG THE DVST ENCLOASED HEARE:
BLESE BE Y MAN Y SPARES THES STONES,
AND CVRST BE HE Y MOVES MY BONES.

THE INSCRIPTION ON SHAKESPEARE'S TOMB

the diary of a later vicar of Stratford. April 23 Shakespeare died and was buried within the chancel of the parish church, an honor accorded him not because he was a great poet, but because he was a wealthy citizen. The strange imprecation carved upon his tomb, possibly by his own direction, was to prevent some future sexton from removing his bones to the neighboring charnel-house, like the unsanctified relics of any other forgotten parishioner. Some thirty thousand pilgrims now visit this grave annually.

We naturally wish to know what kind of man Shakespeare was among his fellow men. He was certainly popular. "I loved the man," said Ben Jonson, "and do honor his memory on this side idolatry. He was, indeed, honest and of an open and free nature." Frequently he is referred to as "the gentle Shakespeare," and the tradition of his geniality must be well founded, for only through

Personal Qualities

some peculiar charm of sympathetic personality could he have extracted the secrets of all sorts and conditions of men, from gentlemen of the court, like his friend the Earl of Southampton, to the street vagabond Autolycus. He had a large, tolerant, and beneficent nature, which was disposed to find "good in everything." Justice and virtue he loved, but even more he loved mercy and charity. "Though you are a fool and a knave, you shall eat," says Lafeu to Parolles, in *All's Well that Ends Well*. Upon everything bearing the human image he looked with a tender and sympathetic eye. Even the psalm-singing Puritans, whom he could not like, he condemned only with gentle satire. His characteristic moral attitude is that of strict impartiality. He is patriotic without political prejudice, religious without religious doctrines. And his all-comprehending intelligence envelops human experience like an atmosphere, luminous with the impartial light of the sun.

Order and Classification of the Plays

The thirty-seven plays generally attributed to Shakespeare were written, it is believed, within the twenty years between 1591 and 1611. The chronological order in which they appeared is still a matter of learned conjecture; very few dates can be assigned to the plays with positive certainty. Evidence upon this point is found mainly in incidental allusions by contemporary writers and allusions in the plays to current events. There is also a progressive development indicated by the subject-matter, by the artistic workmanship, and especially by the treatment of meter. For example, rhyme and lines of various length, with end pause ("end-stopped"), are frequent in the early plays and gradually give place to perfect blank verse. From these sources enough has been learned to make a tentative arrangement of the plays that is sufficiently accurate for illustrating the successive stages in the growth of Shakespeare's mind and art. When arranged according to the probable dates of composition, the plays fall somewhat naturally into four groups, as in the following table, based upon Sidney Lee's conclusions:—

First Period, 1591–1594: *Love's Labor's Lost*, 1591; *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, 1591; *Comedy of Errors*, 1592; *Romeo and Juliet*, 1592; 1, 2, 3, *Henry VI*, 1592; *Richard III*, 1593; *Richard II*, 1593; *Titus Andronicus*, 1593; *Merchant of Venice*, 1594; *King John*, 1594.

Second Period, 1595–1600: *Midsummer Night's Dream*, 1595; *All's Well that Ends Well*, 1595; *Taming of the Shrew*, 1595; 1, 2, *Henry IV*, 1597; *Merry Wives of Windsor*, 1597; *Henry V*, 1598; *Much Ado About Nothing*, 1599; *As You Like It*, 1599; *Twelfth Night*, 1600.

Third Period, 1600–1608: *Julius Cæsar*, 1600; *Hamlet*, 1602; *Troilus and Cressida*, 1603; *Othello*, 1604; *Measure for Measure*, 1604; *Macbeth*, 1606; *King Lear*, 1607; *Timon of Athens*, 1608.

Fourth Period, 1608–1612: *Pericles*, 1608; *Antony and Cleopatra*, 1608; *Coriolanus*, 1609; *Cymbeline*, 1610; *The Winter's Tale*, 1611; *The Tempest*, 1611; *Henry VIII*, 1612.

Plays of the First Period

The first period contains Shakespeare's apprentice work, much of it imitative and experimental. Some of the plays are actually poor plays, with passages and characters that are irredeemably bad. Those critics who, unwilling to admit any lapses from pure inspiration, always assign the bad portions to "an inferior hand," are more reverent than wise, denying to Shakespeare the common right of growth through experience and self-discipline. In *Love's Labor's Lost*, generally accepted as Shakespeare's first play, the influence of Lyly's comedies is clearly seen. The dialogue often becomes merely a sprightly exchange of fantastic conceits, puns, and antitheses, an elegant but irrelevant exercise of wits. There is plenty of alliteration, or "affecting the letter," as Holofernes calls it. There is also a curious uncertainty as to what meter to use. Blank verse is mixed with rhymed couplets, quatrains, sonnets (one in Alexandrines), and choice euphuistic prose. The play is a good-natured satire of contemporary society, full of clever things, exhibiting a prodigal and undisciplined creative power.

With a thrifty instinct Shakespeare seized upon prevailing fads and tendencies to gain quick success. The tragedy of horrors of the Kyd-Marlowe type was exceedingly popular, so he wrote the repulsive *Titus Andronicus*, which contains only occasional passages that are worthy even of his unripe genius.

Influence of Marlowe

But the play, bad as it is, was an immense success. Marlowe's influence is also apparent in *Richard III*, a "one man" drama of the Tamburlaine type. Richard's turbulent passion, gigantic and brutal energy, and impious defiance of all moral restraints are traits of the superhuman hero like Tamburlaine. *Henry VI* and *King John* are specimens of Shakespeare's handiwork in recasting old plays. The *Merchant of Venice* is filled with the spirit of the Renaissance, Italian culture, love of beauty, music, and classic allusion. Portia moralizes like a Florentine philosopher, and Lorenzo rhapsodizes upon the harmony of the spheres "quiring to the young-eyed cherubins." In beauty of style, especially in Portia's plea for mercy and in the idyllic scene of the fifth act, the play surpassed all dramatic writing that had preceded it.

Influence of the Renaissance

The finest achievement of this early period, perhaps, is *Romeo and Juliet*, his first tragedy, which "as a tragic poem on the theme of love has no rival in any literature." In this play Shakespeare wrote with a spontaneous creative ecstasy. The characters here become real human beings, existing for themselves and not simply for the plot. The interest is no longer concentrated upon one or two characters, but is distributed among several. And through the play flows a stream of beautiful poetry, always at spring flood of passionate fervor. Aged reason is silent, precipitate youth reigns. Even old Capulet and Montague draw swords as hotly as young Tybalt. It is such a play, seemingly, as only inspired youth could have written.

Romeo and Juliet

To this first period belong Shakespeare's youthful poems, the only productions which he addressed directly to the read-

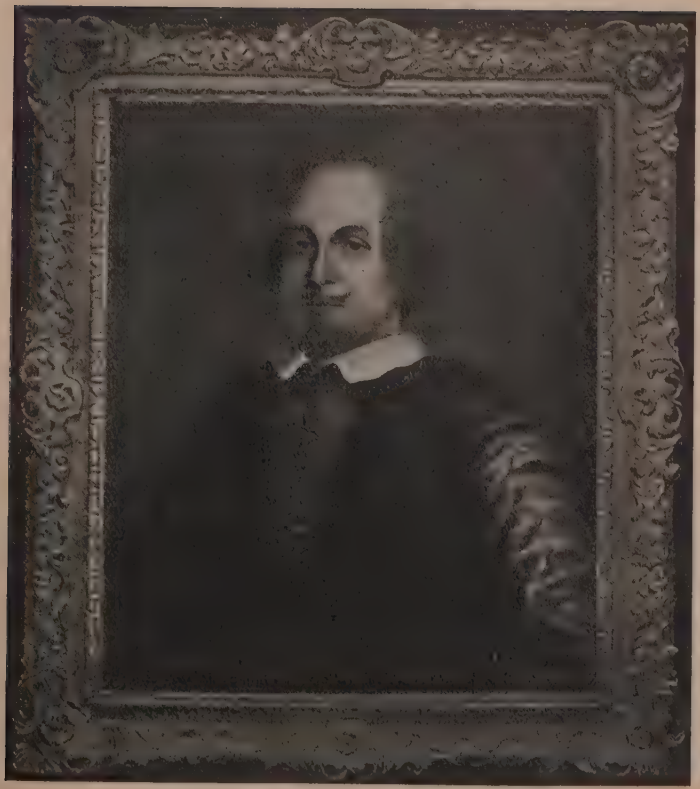
ing public; for, so far as is known, not a single play was ever published under his direction. *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece* are amatory poems of a type then popular, expressing a poetic temperament that is acutely responsive to every appeal of sensuous beauty. They are excessive in "glittering conceit and high-wrought fantasy." The poems brought to the poet immediate fame, and he became the "honey-tongued Shakespeare" and the "mellifluous Shakespeare" with the "honey-flowing vaine."

Early Poems

The *Sonnets* were published in 1609, probably without the author's consent. For ten years or more they had been circulating in manuscript, a fashion of publication borrowed from France and Italy, and due partly, no doubt, to the personal note that characterizes the sonnet. This series of one hundred and fifty-four sonnets celebrates a passionate devotion to two persons, a young man, presumably Shakespeare's friend and patron, the Earl of Southampton, and a mysterious "dark lady" whom the poet rebukes for her proud disdain and unfaithfulness. Whether the poet is writing in the spirit of conventional sonneteering of the time, or whether he is "unlocking his heart," is one of the most baffling problems of literary criticism, and it is still unsolved. The intense passion and vehement expression seem consistent only with autobiographic revelation; on the other hand, the frequent use of the prevailing affectations of the fashionable sonneteers seems to indicate that Shakespeare was only contributing the last refinements to an elegant pastime. "Many reach levels of lyric melody and meditative energy," says Sidney Lee, "that are hardly to be matched elsewhere in poetry. The best examples are charged with the mellowed sweetness of rhythm and meter, the depth of thought and feeling, the vividness of imagery and the stimulating fervor of expression which are the finest proofs of poetic power. On the other hand, many sink almost into inanity beneath the burden of quibbles and conceits."

Sonnets

The second dramatic period is that of the great comedies,



WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

From the Stratford Portrait

the period of Shakespeare's joyousness, when the happy aspects of life seemed to engage his mind exclusively. In the wonderful troupe of comic characters created at this time stands Falstaff, the supreme comic figure of literature. *Midsummer Night's Dream* was a surprising display of adventuresome originality. Fairy mythology had long been common property of poets and people, but no such use of it had ever been made. Here was a new Puck and a new Titania. The multiplicity of strange follies, the mad confusion and hilarious mockery of love-making, proving Bottom's saying that "reason and love keep little company together," are sources of entrancing delight. It is "Shakespeare at lyric play with human life."

Second Dramatic Period

The perfection of pure comedy was reached in that incomparable trio, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *As You Like It*, and *Twelfth Night, or What You Will*, "the three central stars in the crown of Shakespeare's comic muse." The very titles suggest complete abandonment to mirth and wild frolic. What a company of stage favorites, immortal in their charm as youth itself, Beatrice and Benedict, Rosalind and Orlando, Viola, Olivia, Touchstone, Malvolio, and Sir Toby! What flashing wit, superb humor, piquant mischief, rippling merriment, and tumultuous fun! The stars were auspicious when these people were born to the stage.

The Three Great Comedies

If choice must be made, *As You Like It* claims preëminence. This play represents the perfected type of romantic comedy. "No other comedy," says Stopford Brooke, "has the same equality of poetry, the same continuity of lovely emotion, of delightful charm, and of finished execution." The plot is from Lodge's *Rosalynde*, but to Lodge's story Shakespeare added the characters Jaques, Touchstone, and Audrey. The substance is spun out of the inexhaustible theme of love, and here it is love in Protean form, —love of high-born hero and heroine, of clown and country

As You Like It

wench, love of friend for friend, of servant for master and mistress. And it is love jubilant and triumphant, troubled by no shadow of gloom. The love-play between Orlando and Rosalind is the sprightliest conversation conceivable. Love kindles their intellects to the finest fire of speech.

As love is the dominant theme, so beauty is the pervasive quality of the play, beauty of thought, of sentiment, and of scene. Rosalind's presence would be a purifying influence anywhere. Sage thought exudes from the crabbed Jaques like medicinal gums from the rough-barked trees, and Touchstone is the wisest fool ever born. The pastoral setting of the play gives added beauty to every feature. The Forest of Arden is enchanted ground, and yet it is the Warwickshire woodland of the poet's boyhood, where nature first taught him to "warble his native woodnotes wild."

Twelfth Night has been called Shakespeare's "farewell to mirth." He had now reached the third stage of his dramatic development, the period of the great tragedies, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Macbeth*, and *King Lear*, "the four wheels of his chariot." There is a theory that at this time some great personal sorrow came upon the poet, to transform his thoughts so completely. Perhaps, however, it was only the culmination of his thinking upon the mystery of human suffering. Indeed, we may note "the first breathing of tragic feeling even in the gayest of the early comedies, increasing in volume and intensity until the storm rises and blows all laughter out of his plays, except the laughter of the fool." He now grappled with the problems of evil, pain, and death, penetrated to the depths of sin and black despair, and laid bare the deepest secrets of the soul.

The Third Period

Each play unfolds the destructive force of some typical evil in human nature, ambition in *Macbeth*, pride in *Coriolanus*, jealousy in *Othello*. *Julius Cæsar* and *Hamlet* are tragedies of thought; Brutus and Hamlet are philosophic idealists, whose fine natures are in painful discord with the world of vulgar

and hopeless reality. *Othello*, *Macbeth*, and the others are tragedies of passion, in which the suffering arises from want of thought and sane reasoning. On Othello, "wave-drenched and blinded by the passion of love," jealousy works like a burning poison. His simple and honest mind is no match for the subtle and diabolic intellect of Iago, and in the conflict it breaks down in pitiable bewilderment. But the final expiation of his madness is nobly concluded:—

Tragedies of Thought and Tragedies of Passion

> When you shall these unlucky deeds relate,
> Speak of me as I am; nothing extenuate,
> Nor set down aught in malice: then must you speak
> Of one that loved not wisely, but too well;
> Of one not easily jealous, but being wrought,
> Perplex'd in the extreme; of one whose hand,
> Like the base Indian, threw a pearl away
> Richer than all his tribe.

The shortest and swiftest in action, and therefore the best acting tragedy, is *Macbeth*. Terrors follow each other breathlessly, and the wild devastation of souls begins at the very opening of the play with the evil portent of the witches. The play is singular, too, in the elevation of the heroine to equal dignity with the hero. The throne of their bloody striving is a divided throne. Lady Macbeth has even the stronger will to do evil. In the most terrible speech ever uttered by a woman, she prays to be unsexed and made "top-full of direst cruelty," but she fails by reason of the very woman's tenderness from which she prayed to be delivered. Macbeth's will is paralyzed by imagination. At the slightest hint his "heat-oppressed brain" is filled with visions which he at once embodies in poetic imagery. For this reason he can never "trammel up the consequences" of his deeds. A spot of blood on his hand excites him, not to fear, but to exquisite poetry:—

Macbeth

Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
Clean from my hand? No, this my hand will rather
The multitudinous seas incarnadine,
Making the green one red.

By this sensitive endowment of poetry the character of Macbeth is redeemed from brutality. The play abounds in striking contrasts, such as the scene at the gate of Macbeth's castle, where Lady Macbeth within is planning the murder of Duncan and her victim without is praising the castle for its "pleasant seat"; or the scene of the drunken porter inserted between the two most intense incidents of the plot. Such passages not only reveal truth, but they are truth. Indeed, it is one of the remarkable facts about these greatest plays that they always meet successfully the test question: Is this true to nature and experience?

The most famous of the tragedies is *Hamlet*, most subtle in its thought, most finished in its art, most beautiful in its poetry. The character of Hamlet has probably aroused more interest, critical and uncritical, than any other character in the literature of imagination. Everybody loves Hamlet and shares sympathetically with him the deep perplexity of his problem. He fascinates us with his delicately sensitive nature, his brilliant intellectuality, and his poignant suffering. In the midst of radiant youth, when love of father and mother and faith in human goodness are the primal substance of his life, his father is murdered by his uncle and his mother marries the murderer. By this sudden disclosure of human grossness the very order of nature is upset, and what was "sometime a paradox" becomes literal truth. The mother's faithlessness causes the deepest pang, and his love is turned to loathing of her deed. Life for him is emptied of its ideals; his whole being shudders with a sense of sickening disillusionment. It is not strange that he sinks into a melancholy which his friends in all ages have sometimes mistaken for madness. But a hero who is not responsible for his acts would be with-

Hamlet

out dramatic interest. Those who think Hamlet insane apparently fail to comprehend fully the depths of his suffering and, like Ophelia, are deceived by outward appearances:—

> O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!
> The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's eye, tongue, sword;
> The expectancy and rose of the fair state,
> The glass of fashion and the mold of form,
> The observed of all observers, quite, quite down!
> And I, of ladies most deject and wretched,
> That suck'd the honey of his music vows,
> Now see that noble and most sovereign reason,
> Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune, and harsh;
> That unmatch'd form and feature of blown youth
> Blasted with ecstasy.

Special Distinction of Hamlet

It is significant that this play was rewritten with great care by Shakespeare. If there could be for him a favorite play, it would seem as if he had written into this one the very speech of his own heart and soul. As Schelling suggests, upon it he seems to have "lavished the golden plenty of his inexhaustible art." It is a psychological study, wrought out with deepest insight; it is a moral problem, colored with religious thought; it is an embodiment of the tragic pathos arising from the defeat of a noble nature in its struggle with the elements of baseness in humanity. Indeed *Hamlet* may be regarded as a symbol of the conflict of good and evil in the world.

King Lear

The tragedy of *King Lear*, in the judgment of Professor Dowden, "is the greatest single achievement in poetry of the Teutonic genius." It is too tragic, almost, to be endured. The function of tragedy, which is to exalt and purify the soul by images of pity and terror, according to Aristotle, here reaches its utmost limit. The spectacle of human depravity and suffering is vast and incomprehensible; the atmosphere of the play is strange, cold, and horrifying, as if the powers of darkness in nature and man were in league to destroy helpless innocence and goodness. The figure of Lear

is like that of Prometheus, enduring the wrath of jealous gods; his suffering seems to be not merely the suffering of an individual, but of all humanity. The conclusion, so unutterably sad, seems the necessity of fate; the result of some inexorable law of the universe which we cannot understand and to which we cannot be reconciled. Why must Cordelia die? This question baffled Shakespeare even as it baffles us.

Of the four great tragedies, *King Lear* is least presentable on the stage, for seldom does an actor possess the gigantic power required to interpret adequately the title character. Moreover, the vastness of conception and vagueness of meaning, the thick and forbidding gloom, and the repellent inhumanity of the evil characters carry it beyond popular appreciation.

From the darkness and spiritual turmoil of the tragic period Shakespeare passed again into light and spiritual serenity—not the happy morning light of the early comedies, however, but the pensive light of closing day. Three plays of the fourth period embody this change, *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *The Tempest*. The prevailing spirit is that of kindliness and broad tolerance; the keynote of the sentiment of each is forgiveness. Moral problems have been solved, or their solution abandoned, and there is a great peace in the poet's mind:—

Spirit of the Fourth Period

> Let us not burthen our remembrance with
> A heaviness that's gone.

His thoughts are once more of home. The Warwickshire fields reappear in *The Winter's Tale*. The beauty of the simple life is celebrated. The charm of the heroines is their captivating simplicity, and we are permitted to believe that the model for Perdita and Miranda was the poet's daughter Judith. In grace and sweetness of character, it is doubtful if Shakespeare elsewhere equaled Imogen, the one great figure in *Cymbeline*.

The Tempest is generally believed to be the last play com-

pleted by Shakespeare. Here he makes a final survey of human nature, evil and good, repulsive and beautiful, from the man-beast Caliban to the god-man Prospero; records his final impressions of life's hopes and illusions, and then like Prospero breaks his magic wand and buries his book. Ariel, spirit of the air and faithful instrument of his magic art, the fitting symbol of poetic inspiration, he dismisses forever, not without a pang of regret:—

The Tempest

> Why, that's my dainty Ariel. I shall miss thee,
> But yet thou shalt have freedom.

Like the little play for Ferdinand and Miranda, the great play of life comes to the last act and the curtain falls:—

> Our revels now are ended. These our actors,
> As I foretold you, were all spirits and
> Are melted into air, into thin air:
> And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,
> The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
> The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
> Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve
> And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
> Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
> As dreams are made on, and our little life
> Is rounded with a sleep.

The scenes of fourteen of Shakespeare's plays are laid in Great Britain. Ten of these plays are of a type peculiar to English literature called the "Chronicle play," a crude dramatization of history that was exceedingly popular, especially after the defeat of the Armada, in 1588, when patriotic enthusiasm reached its flood-tide. The people found a peculiar delight in the glorification of English deeds of the past. The form of the Chronicle play, like that of the Miracle play, is a dramatic narrative in which episodes are connected loosely in chronological order, rather than in the order determined by relationship of characters to each other. Unity, the prime essential of artistic drama, is

Chronicle Plays

lacking. The dramatist is hampered by the required fidelity to fact. But he has the advantage of dealing with real people, and by imagination may set the bright blood coursing in the veins of dead kings and queens and make of the past a vivid and glorified present reality.

With characteristic adaptiveness Shakespeare seized upon this popular type, transformed and perfected it, and then abandoned

THE GLOBE THEATER, LONDON

it. The three parts of *Henry VI* are Chronicle plays pure and simple, made from crude plays already in existence. *Richard III* and *Richard II* are more compact and artistic in structure.

Historical Plays

In *Henry IV* the character study deepens and the historic interest is varied by comic and romantic elements. Three characters dominate the interest: the roistering Prince, the incomparable Falstaff, reeking with sack and tavern wit, and the impetuous, high-minded Hotspur, "charged with the electricity of chivalry." The character of

Falstaff is pure fiction, and is the finest illustration of Shakespeare's method of giving humorous relief to historic and tragic action. Greatest of the historical plays is *Henry V*, in which the poet seems to present his ideal of heroic manhood. The theme is the glory of England. Henry's speeches of lofty patriotism even to-day, says Andrew Lang, "still stir the blood like the sound of a trumpet." Each of these plays bears the name of an English king, — an august procession, ending with Henry VIII, father of Elizabeth, a historic pageant unparalleled in poetic splendor and magnificence.

The Roman Plays

The three Roman tragedies, *Julius Cæsar*, *Coriolanus*, and *Antony and Cleopatra*, stand in respect to dramatic art between the English historical plays and the four great tragedies. The material was taken entirely from North's translation of *Plutarch*, and, though often used with remarkable literalness, is treated imaginatively rather than historically. The moral interest predominates and history becomes tragedy. Yet Shakespeare's poetized Romans are generally more vivid and true than the Romans of the histories. As a work of dramatic art, in spite of its lack of unity, *Julius Cæsar* is the most successful of the three plays. The interest is distributed among several important characters,

Julius Cæsar

yet so skillfully is it directed that one is not troubled by the question whether Cæsar or Brutus is the hero of the play. Brutus is undoubtedly Shakespeare's finest portrait study of a great historic character, and Portia, the wife of Brutus, is the embodiment of his noblest ideal of mature womanhood.

Coriolanus is a study of democracy and aristocracy. A proud nobleman is in conflict with the people, "the beast with many heads," and he is ruined, not so much by the stupidity of the

Coriolanus

plebeian mob as by his own egoism and violent self-will. Yet Coriolanus is one of the noblest of Shakespeare's creations. Hardly less appealing is Volumnia, the majestic figure of Roman motherhood.

Antony and Cleopatra is like a great symphony, Oriental in its gorgeous color and passionate abandonment to the luxury of mere beauty and delight. Its rich variety of interest is like the "infinite variety" of its heroine. There is a sense of vastness about it somewhat like that of *King Lear*, only of different effect. "The figures dilate to proportions greater than human, and are seen through a golden haze of sensuous splendor." But the moral is as severely drawn as in any of the plays. The play pictures the breaking down of a great character, the tragic abasement of nobility by indulgence in pleasure. Mark Antony, "the greatest prince o' the world," becomes the slave of Cleopatra, the "serpent of old Nile."

Antony and Cleopatra

Shakespeare's most masterly gift is the power of portraying character. Next to this is the gift of poetic expression. The singular fact about his style is that he has no definable style. To say that a passage is distinctively Shakespearian is simply to say that it is supremely good. He commands the qualities of all good style, and does not always disdain the qualities of bad style. He cannot be individualized. His vocabulary of fifteen thousand words, the largest ever used by a poet, is a treasury garnered from books, sifted from all languages, copied from the exquisites of the court and from the guttersnipes of Thames Street. He coins words lavishly, as if exercising a royal prerogative. No writer can so adequately express subtle shades of thought and vague impulses of emotion. Intent upon the thought, he sometimes works havoc with grammar; pronouns are ill respecters of person, and verbs often desert their subjects shamelessly.

Shakespeare and Style

Vocabulary

If there is any distinguishing feature of Shakespeare's style, it is his "royal wealth of metaphor." He thinks in metaphors and speaks in pictures. In the early plays the metaphors are petted and fondled, as it were, and elaborated often to excess; in the later plays they are used in profusion, and at times

with involved and obscure meaning. The so-called mixed metaphors, like Hamlet's thought "to take up arms against a sea of troubles," are often due, not to carelessness, but to the tumultuous thought that rushes too fast to observe the conventions of rhetoric. Lightning flashes of thought, swift divinations of truth, explosive outbursts of passion, and sudden thrills of pathos find habitual expression in metaphors. And the metaphor always surprises with its fresh originality, like the description of Beatrice:—

Use of Metaphor

> Disdain and scorn ride sparkling in her eyes.

Blank verse, as Shakespeare found it, was stiff and unwieldy, lacking in fluency and easy adaptation to the thought. Lines were produced mechanically, as if all from one mold, and were generally isolated by a pause at the end; "drumming decksyllabons," a contemporary happily styled them, beaten out in a dull monotony. Marlowe showed the artistic possibilities of the new form and Shakespeare developed them. The basic form is a line of ten syllables, or five iambic feet. To this Shakespeare gave variety and flexibility by using substitute feet, an anapest or trochee for an iambus, for example; by using the extra syllable at the end of a line, feminine ending, as it is called; and by prolonging a line occasionally into an Alexandrine. He obtained a flowing movement by the overrunning of lines, allowing the pauses to fall naturally where the thought would place them instead of fixing them mechanically at the end of every line. He proved the facility with which blank verse can be broken up for dialogue—which had been conducted very awkwardly in rhymed verse. But these are merely the fundamental and technical features of his marvelous instrument; genius added the matchless beauty and power of its music.

The Mastery of Blank Verse

As in perfecting blank verse, so in perfecting the romantic

form as the national form of drama, Shakespeare was guided solely by his sense of fitness and truth. He scorned "art made tongue-tied by authority." It is a remarkable fact, however, that he invented no new dramatic elements, but merely completed the development of those already in use. In the construction of his plays he ignored the classic "unities," and connected the loose-jointed, miscellaneous parts by some comprehensive idea, rather than by a unifying action. To secure variety and a larger area of life, an under-plot is often skillfully interwoven with the main action. Short scenes are used in great number to add minor touches of color or points of explanation. Constant use is made of the principle of contrast and relief, the tragic made more tragic by the nearness of the comic, as in real life. To the same purpose is the mingling of songs with the most tragic events, "to make the pity more rare, and of a finer edge, to touch the skirts of darkness with a pathetic gleam, or to mingle some keen irony with the transitory triumph of life." An interesting device is the revelation of the main motive of a plot in the opening words of the play. The momentary appearance of the witches at the beginning of *Macbeth* strikes the keynote of the tragedy. The Duke's speech about love and music with which *Twelfth Night* opens is like an overture in which the whole play is condensed.

The Perfected Romantic Drama

Shakespeare was never troubled by small inconsistencies, in the presence of a large artistic purpose. He was indifferent to anachronisms, being quite content to dress the people of the mythical days of *Cymbeline* in the Italian fashions of the Renaissance. He made large concessions to the robust tastes of his audiences in giving them their much-loved wrestling-matches, fencing scenes, clown's foolery, and dancing. That his artistic sense was sometimes outraged by the liberty allowed the clowns is shown in Hamlet's speech to the players: "Let those that play the clowns speak no more than is set down to them."

Conflict of Art and Public Taste

But with consummate skill these outside features were generally subdued to the purposes of art. His method of improving old features is seen in his treatment of the clown. This character, as he found it, was merely a fun-maker with no necessary relation to the play; in *Lear* he made it a subtle instrument for expressing the deepest pathos of the tragedy. As all nature yielded to Prospero's magic wand, all dramatic matter yielded to the magic touch of Shakespeare's artistic instinct.

The miracle of genius is nowhere else manifested in such vast proportions as in the works of Shakespeare. His knowledge, creative power, variety, breadth of humor, and depth of spiritual insight, all give the impression of the illimitable. One can hardly contemplate his endowments without applying to him his own words, "How noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in apprehension how like a god!" He knows how every form of humanity, old and young, wise and foolish, must express itself. He paints life with full and absolute truth. His characters are beings of flesh and blood who rejoice and suffer with ourselves as daily companions. Even his creatures of pure imagination—ghosts, witches, and fairies—we accept as realities. Other poets are great in some qualities; Shakespeare is great in all qualities. His genius is measureless because there is none other with which it can in whole be compared.

The Greatness of his Genius

But Shakespeare died quite unconscious of his supremacy. He did not even ask posterity to read his works. Seven years after his death his fellow-actors, Heming and Condell, gathered the tattered copies of his plays from the property-box of the theater and published them in the precious "First Folio of 1623." To this volume Ben Jonson contributed a poem in praise of his "beloved master," in which with prevision wise and true he wrote:—

He was not of an age, but for all time.

Shakespeare's Associates and Successors

The most conspicuous figure among Shakespeare's fellow-dramatists was Ben Jonson, who became the acknowledged leader and literary dictator among the wits of the period of King James. His admirers "of the tribe of Ben" were influenced quite as much by the precepts of his conversations as by the examples of his writing. At the Mermaid, and finally in the "Apollo" room of the Devil Tavern, he sat enthroned and led the convivial discussions of literature and canary wine. In these merry conferences a new criticism was born, to be matured in the succeeding age — a criticism in which good poetry was to be distinguished not by its inspiration, but by its art.

Ben Jonson, 1573–1637

BEN JONSON

Jonson was robust and burly in person; independent, censorious, and pugnacious in mental habits; and thoroughly admirable for a bluff, hearty honesty that won the respect even of his enemies. He was a classicist and fought valiantly for his opinions against the overwhelming odds of the romanticists. Without question he was the most learned poet of the age. His plays are ponderous and prolix, exhibiting vast industry in observation and research, "the labored and understanding works of Master Jonson," his contemporary Webster calls them. They are vigorous, dig-

Intellectual Qualities

nified, broadly humorous, but lacking in passion and rapture and grace. There is no reason to suppose that he was jealous of Shakespeare or hostile to his success; but he deplored Shakespeare's sweeping disregard of literary rules. He could say, from his own point of view, that Shakespeare "lacked art," and yet be nobly generous in his final tribute of praise. He was incapable of comprehending the difference between erudition and inspiration.

Jonson's career was stormy and picturesque. He was born in 1573 and was "brought up poorly," he says. He was educated at Westminster School. It is not certain that he ever studied at Oxford or Cambridge, but from each university he received an honorary degree. He was apprenticed to the trade of his stepfather, a bricklayer, a fact that his enemies did not allow him to forget. From this uninspiring business he escaped to Flanders, where he served in the army; returned to London and became an actor and playwright; and killed a fellow-actor in a duel, for which he barely escaped capital punishment. His efforts to reform the stage were impeded by his quarrels with fellow-dramatists; he satirized Marston, Dekker, and others in his *Poetaster* and was satirized in return in Dekker's *Satirio-mastix*. In 1618 he walked to Scotland to visit Drummond of Hawthornden, the Scottish representative of Elizabethan poetry. Misfortunes multiplied in his last years. His library with many manuscripts was burned; he lost favor at court; his last attempts at comedy were failures. But there was some comfort in a final pension of £100 and a yearly butt of canary from the royal cellars. In 1637 he died and was buried in Westminster Abbey, and on his tomb was carved, as if from hasty thought, the imperishable epitaph: "O rare Ben Jonson."

A Stormy Career

Jonson had two aims in his dramatic work: to produce an artistically constructed comedy of manners, and to establish the classical form of tragedy. His first and most famous play, *Every Man in His Humor*, illustrates his principles and

peculiar method in comedy. The word "humor" was a current term signifying any personal eccentricity or whim. In this comedy each character is endowed with some affectation or peculiarity of speech or manner, which is exaggerated to exclusive prominence. Every one talks and acts "in his humor." Of the many characters the best is the redoubtable Captain Bobadil, a braggart worthy of his literary immortality and fit companion for Falstaff and Ancient Pistol. The less interesting *Every Man out of His Humor* embodies the theory that every humor will cure itself by its own excess.

Every Man in His Humor

The idea of the "humor" was used by Jonson in his other comedies, the best of which are *Volpone, or The Fox*, a vivid presentation of the villainies of a prodigious hypocrite; *Epicœne, or The Silent Woman*, the hero of which is a misanthrope, who hates noise and is subjected to ludicrous sufferings by his plotting household; and *The Alchemist*, a study of human gullibility, in which the alchemist represents the typical quack who thrives by his clever frauds in all ages. This comedy is regarded as Jonson's masterpiece. *Bartholomew Fair* represents the highest development of Jonson's "humorous" genius; but its unvarnished realism is now hardly endurable. An unfinished pastoral play, *The Sad Shepherd*, is a surprising contrast to Jonson's other plays, refined, graceful, and sweet with the fresh odors of the greenwood where Robin Hood and Maid Marion dwell. In beauty and poetic merit it stands with Fletcher's *Faithful Shepherdess* and Milton's *Comus*.

Principal Comedies

Jonson was an avowed satirist. With a resolute will he declares:—

> I'll strip the ragged follies of the time
> Naked as at their birth.

This he does so thoroughly that the naked exposure is often intolerable for its grossness and vulgarity. He is a realist of

extraordinary frankness. Nowhere in literature is there so vivid a picture of the vices and frivolities of Elizabethan London as in his comedies. In *Cynthia's Revels* he satirized court society; in *The Poetaster* he satirized his fellow-poets; and generally he lashed affectations and vices in a bluff and rugged manner that commanded the respect even of his smarting victims.

Jonson as a Satirist

The two Latinized tragedies, *Sejanus* and *Catiline*, represent Jonson's ideal of classic propriety. They are Roman to the letter, strictly obedient to classic rules, and minutely accurate in historical detail; but the characters, in comparison with Shakespeare's Romans, lack the warmth of reality. The art is excellent, but it is shackled with a theory. Indeed, this is Jonson's limitation; he works according to a program, and is as intent upon demonstrating a dramatic principle as upon presenting a dramatic picture of life. In the comedies he works upon the surface of human character, in his eagerness to portray its "humors." His genius is never seen, like Shakespeare's, in sudden flashes of profound insight and revelation; it is always deliberate, logical, and observant of the rules. His lyrics, however, are an exception, for in these he shows real spontaneity as well as poetic grace.

Jonson's Classical Bias

This lyric gift was developed in the *Masques*, for which Jonson acquired special fame. The masque is a dramatic spectacle consisting of songs, dancing, instrumental music, elaborate scenery, and gorgeous costumes. The themes are generally allegorical and the characters represent gods and goddesses of mythology, or abstract qualities, as Wit, Beauty, Despair. This form of entertainment was immensely popular during the reign of James I, and fabulous sums were expended in the presentations. Shirley's *Temple of Peace* was given by the Inns of Court in 1634 at a cost of £21,000, and the same year at a similar cost Carew's *Cœlum Britannicum*, in which the King himself took part, was given at court. Jon-

Masques

son, with the aid of the court architect, Inigo Jones, and the court musicians and dancing masters, produced nearly forty of these poetical pageants. He perfected the court masque, and his work in this peculiar dramatic species was unsurpassed, except by Milton's *Comus*, in which a transient form of fashionable entertainment was transformed into imperishable poetry.

The custom of collaboration in the writing of plays produced the unique intellectual partnership of Beaumont and Fletcher. Fifty-two plays are attributed to these authors, one-third of which at least must have been written jointly. In their own time they enjoyed a popularity surpassing probably even that of Shakespeare. They were friends of Ben Jonson, but were uninfluenced by his classicism and wrote entirely in the romantic manner of Shakespeare. So closely did Fletcher, at least, approach the Shakespearian manner that he is believed to have aided Shakespeare in writing *Henry VIII*, and to have been aided by Shakespeare in writing *The Two Noble Kinsmen*. The most famous plays of these twin poets are *The Maid's Tragedy* and *Philaster*, in which the beauty of the poetry is diminished by the unnatural and repulsive features of the plots. *The Humorous Lieutenant* and *Rule a Wife and Have a Wife* are the most noteworthy of the comedies; *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* is a clever burlesque of Quixotic knight-errantry. *The Faithful Shepherdess*, a pastoral drama, written by Fletcher alone, is remarkable for its freshness and lyric grace.

Francis Beaumont, 1584–1616.
John Fletcher, 1579–1625

The marks of decadence are upon the work of these poets. They accepted the standards of the corrupt court of James I, and their plays are stained with the moral grossness that there prevailed beneath an exterior of gilded refinement. The atmosphere of these plays is heavy with sickening perfumes; their wit and humor are drenched with shameless ribaldry. There

are passages of singular beauty of diction, dialogue of shimmering brilliancy, but never passages of large wisdom and lofty sentiment. These dramatists were masters of tragic pathos, but strangers to real tragic passion. Like their weakened moral fiber is their debilitated blank verse, in which strength and character are sacrificed for a careless naturalness and a pleasing fluency. They were content to be popular and therefore failed to be great. Lamb described them as "a kind of lesser Sidneys and Shakespeares," and their highest praise is to have suggested such comparisons.

Decadent Qualities

A source of constant astonishment is the profuse creative power of the minor Elizabethan dramatists. Thomas Heywood, whom Lamb regarded as "a sort of prose Shakespeare," claimed two hundred and twenty plays, in which, he says, "I had an entire hand or at least a main finger." In only a single play of all this vast output, *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, is the Shakespearian spark still found alive. Another prolific playwright was Thomas Middleton, who tried every species of the drama and in *The Changeling*, *Women beware Women*, and *The Spanish Gipsy*, achieved a distinction that is still respected. His *Witch* is interesting for the critical controversy that has been waged over the question as to who was the borrower of the witch scenes in *Macbeth*, Shakespeare or Middleton.

Thomas Heywood, 1581?–1650?

Thomas Middleton, 1570–1627

The chief interest of these plays for the modern reader is in the vivid pictures they give of contemporary manners. In this respect Thomas Dekker is especially entertaining in his racy sketches of London life, drawn with sympathetic kindliness and a hearty, bustling humor, and often with a lyric expression of surprising sweetness and tenderness. His *Shoemaker's Holiday* is still read with delight and occasionally presented on the stage.

Thomas Dekker, 1570?–1641?

The sturdy determination of every poet to be a playwright is illustrated by George Chapman, whose ponderous plays

exhibit most of the faults and few of the merits of the romantic drama. *Bussy d'Amboy*, his highest achievement in tragedy, is extravagantly rhetorical and only moderately poetical, yet is far from deserving Dryden's description, "a hideous mingle of false poetry and true nonsense." Chapman's natural quality was epic, and his lyric and dramatic work were forced products. All else that he produced is of little worth in comparison with his translation of Homer, one of the high-water marks of Elizabethan literature.

George Chapman, 1559?–1634

A partner of Chapman and Jonson in the writing of the excellent comedy *Eastward Ho* (which got the authors into jail for speaking disrespectfully of one of the King's Scotch favorites) was John Marston, a harsh-tongued satirist, "a screech-owl among the singing birds." In his *Certain Satires* and *The Scourge of Villainy* he arrogantly disputed with Bishop Hall the honor of being the first English satirist. His propensity for "cuts, thrusts, and foins at whomsoever he meets" was fully indulged in his vigorous and misanthropic plays. *The Malcontent*, perhaps his best play, is of the type of Molière's *Misanthrope*.

John Marston, 1575?–1634

The nearest approach to Shakespearian greatness was made by John Webster in *The White Devil* and *The Duchess of Malfi*, two tragedies that have fascinated even the modern critics with their nightmare horrors. There are passages of power and splendid poetry, but Webster's fundamental conception of dramatic power is wrong. Crime is presented as a spectacle rather than as a result of character. The tragic passion is intense, but not dignified nor profound. There are thrills and shudders, but no exaltations of the soul. However, as Lowell says, "Whatever other effect Webster may produce upon us, he never leaves us indifferent. We may blame, we may criticise, as much as we will; we may say that all this ghastliness is only a

John Webster, 1580?–1625?

trick of theatrical bluelight; we shudder, and admire nevertheless."

Of the thirty-seven plays of Philip Massinger, only one, *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*, has lived to modern times. The unscrupulous usurer, Sir Giles Overreach, the central figure in this admirable comedy, is a well-drawn character and worthy of its enduring popularity. *The Virgin Martyr*, written with Dekker, and *The Roman Actor* mark his highest reach in tragedy. John Ford, a poet of real power, is remembered for his remarkable mingling of terror and tenderness in *The Broken Heart*, a play that represents the nobility and passion of Elizabethan tragedy in its fallen estate. As if the springs of natural passion were exhausted, there was now a morbid straining after the strange and the extraordinary, a clear evidence of dramatic decay. Ford's *Perkin Warbeck* is a late survival of the Chronicle play, worthy of association with Marlowe's *Edward II* and Shakespeare's historical plays. James Shirley, with whom the long roll of dramatists closes, wrote some forty plays, hardly one of which is still read either for pleasure or for edification.

Philip Massinger, 1583–1640. John Ford, 1586–1640? James Shirley, 1596–1666

Catering to the tastes of the depraved court circles of James I and Charles I, the dramatists had corrupted their art, and in sensational extravagance and moral indecency, the glorious Elizabethan drama came to an inglorious end. In 1642 the theaters were closed by order of Parliament, and the condition of the drama as indicated by the plays of the period was an adequate excuse, if not a full justification, for this Puritan prohibition. An art that had produced the noblest poetry of which the national genius has shown itself capable, was now widely regarded as injurious to the social, moral, and religious interests of the national life. But the causes of disaster were deeper than mere Puritan hostility. The drama was suffering from its own excesses. The original inspiration had spent itself; the

End of the Great Dramatic Period

stage no longer expressed the national spirit, and no longer commanded the support of the national sympathy. The "high seriousness" of the drama, as the voice of the people, was lost forever.

PROGRAM OF WORK

CLASS READING. SHAKESPEARE: Study critically one representative play from each period: *Merchant of Venice*, *As You Like It*, *Hamlet*, and *The Tempest*. For more rapid reading and discussion: *Romeo and Juliet*, *Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Macbeth*, and *Winter's Tale*. One Roman play and one historical play, *Julius Cæsar* and *Henry V*, should be read and discussed. *King Lear* should be substituted for any tragedy that may be already familiar to the class.

For the critical study annotated texts should be used from any good series, as Rolfe's, Cl. Press, Arden, Merrill's, R. L. S., Hudson's.

BEN JONSON: *Every Man in His Humor* (Temple, Wheatley); *The Alchemist* (Belles-Lettres).

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER: *Philaster* (Belles-Lettres; selections in Williams, Morley, *Oxford Treasury*).

Representative plays from these minor dramatists may be read in Thayer's *Best Elizabethan Plays*, Gayley's *Representative English Comedies*, Neilson's *Chief Elizabethan Dramatists;* also in *Masterpieces of the English Drama*. Good selections will be found in Williams's *Selections* and Lamb's *Specimens*.

BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM. Lee's *Life of Shakespeare;* Raleigh's *Shakespeare* (E. M. L.); Rolfe's *Life of Shakespeare* and *Shakespeare the Boy;* Neilson and Thorndike's *Facts about Shakespeare;* Halliwell-Phillipps's *Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare;* Lee's *Stratford-on-Avon;* Ward's *History of English Dramatic Literature;* Schelling's *Elizabethan Drama;* Cambridge History, vol. v; Hazlitt's *Shakespeare*.

Dowden's *Shakespeare: His Mind and Art;* Lowell's Shakespeare Once More (*Among My Books*); Bradley's *Shakespearian Tragedy* and *Oxford Lectures on Poetry;* Hudson's *Shakespeare: His Life, Art, and Characters;* Brooke's *On Ten Plays of Shakespeare* and *Ten More Plays of Shakespeare;* Bagehot's Shakespeare the Man (*Literary Studies*); Dowden's *Shakespeare Primer;* Mrs. Jameson's *Shakespeare's Heroines;* Coleridge's *Lectures on Shakespeare* (Beers's Selections); Baker's *Development of Shakespeare as a Dramatist;* MacCallum's *Shakespeare's Roman Plays;* Matthews's *Shakespeare as a Playwright;* Boas's *Shakespeare and his Predecessors;* Brandes's *William Shakespeare;* Lounsbury's

Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist; Johnson's *Shakespeare and his Critics;* Smith's *Eighteenth Century Essays on Shakespeare.*

Neilson's *Complete Dramatic and Poetic Works of Shakespeare;* The *Globe Shakespeare;* Craig's *Oxford Shakespeare;* Furness's *Variorum Edition;* Albright's *The Shakespeare Stage;* Luce's *Handbook to the Works of Shakespeare;* Abbott's *Shakespearian Grammar;* Bartlett's *Concordance;* Sunliffe's *Shakespeare Dictionary;* Ordish's *Shakespeare's London;* Dyer's *Folklore of Shakespeare.*

Symonds's *Ben Jonson;* Swinburne's *Study of Ben Jonson;* Woodbridge's *Studies in Jonson's Comedies;* Rhys's *Ben Jonson* (*Masterpieces of English Drama*); Introductions to Chapman, Beaumont and Fletcher, Webster (*Masterpieces*).

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION AND RESEARCH

1. Give an outline of Shakespeare's life, sifting carefully facts from guesses. 2. A picture of Stratford in Shakespeare's day. 3. Shakespeare's school-days (Rolfe; Baynes's *Shakespeare Studies*, 147–249). 4. Make a study of the schoolmasters in the plays, Holofernes (*Love's Labor's Lost*), Pinch (*Comedy of Errors*), Sir Hugh Evans (*Merry Wives of Windsor*). 5. Investigate the poaching story.

6. Explanation of Greene's attack on Shakespeare in the *Groatsworth of Wit* (Manly's *Prose;* Lee, ch. v). 7. Why did Shakespeare retire to Stratford at the age of forty-seven? 8. How was Shakespeare's art affected by the demands of his audience (Matthews, ch. xvi; Bradley's *Oxford Lectures*)? 9. Define the greatness of Shakespeare; the qualities that make him supreme in English poetry. 10. Why was his greatness not recognized by his contemporaries?

11. Shakespeare's patriotism (study the characters of Bolingbroke in *Richard II*, Faulconbridge in *King John*, and the King in *Henry V*. Read *Richard II*, act II, sc. i, 40–58). 12. Discuss the adequacy of Milton's characterization:—

> Or sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child,
> Warble his native woodnotes wild.

13. Taine says that Hamlet is Shakespeare; others identify him with Prospero, and with Jaques. Reasons for each opinion. 14. Did Shakespeare, as Wordsworth asserts, "unlock his heart" in the Sonnets (Lee, ch. viii; Hazlitt, chs. xii-xiv)? 15. Shakespeare as a prose writer (Collins's *Studies in Shakespeare*, 180–208). 16. The Bacon-Shakespeare controversy (Collins, 332–368; Hazlitt, ch. xv). 17. Make a study of Shakespeare's blank verse, comparing it with preceding and following examples.

18. Ben Jonson's relations with Shakespeare. 19. Compare Jonson with Dickens in the use of "humors." 20. Distinguish the masque from the regular drama.

CHAPTER X

CAVALIERS AND PURITANS

1603–1660

ELIZABETH died in 1603 and James I came to the throne,—a succession that marks the change from a united England, inspired by an intense spirit of nationality and loyalty to the sovereign, to a divided England, without national enthusiasm and with a feeling of distrust and contempt toward the sovereign. The government of James was a despotism based upon the theory of the divine right of kings. To Parliament he said: "Kings are not only God's lieutenants upon earth, and sit upon God's throne, but even by God himself they are called gods." In the next reign, the religious tyranny of Archbishop Laud was added to the political tyranny of the King. Supported by the King, Laud aimed to suppress Puritanism and to restore to the church the practices of Catholicism.

Against this royal arrogance, Puritanism offered another theory of divine right, the divine right of the individual conscience. The Puritan believed himself to be brought through personal righteousness into direct contact with God, and in all matters of sacred import, with which political matters were soon included, he acknowledged no lawful sovereign but the King of Heaven. In such a conflict there could be no compromise. "Who would bring light and darkness, Christ and Anti-Christ, the Ark and Dagon together?" wrote a Puritan champion. The natural tendency of Protestantism to produce division and

Puritanism and the King

separation, Elizabeth kept in check by a policy of wise conciliation and discreet repression. James was neither wise nor discreet, but obstinate, contemptuous toward the people, and stupidly ignorant of the true national spirit. And these qualities were plentifully inherited by his son, Charles.

So there came religious division and confusion and a turmoil of new creeds and sects; then a long and bitter struggle between the people's Parliament and the Throne, and the horrors of civil war,—Puritans fighting against Cavaliers, the psalm-singing "Ironsides" of Cromwell against proud aristocrats and light-hearted revelers, whose fortunes were bound up with those of the King. With the Battle of Naseby in 1645, the Stuart tyranny ended and a new tyranny of Parliament began; four years later Charles was beheaded, and Puritan austerity settled like a winter frost upon the land.

Puritanism, properly speaking, was neither a sect nor a cult, but a mental attitude. It was the protest of a rigid purity against the prevailing laxity in morals, religion, and literature. It was a reform effort, sorely hampered by its own follies. The somber clothes and sanctimonious speech of the Puritans symbolized the severity of their view of life. They renounced a life of joy in this world, in hope of an eternal joy in the world to come. They would have no more a "Merry England," no stage-plays, no May-pole dances, no Christmasings. The beautiful carvings of the churches, the "storied windows richly dight," the grand musical service, were wicked vanities.

Austerity of the Puritans

But the Puritans must not be judged entirely by their long faces and short hair. They were valiant in war and noble in exile, and we must never forget that they gave to the world a new nation founded upon a new ideal of liberty. "The fierce inferences of Puritan theology are no longer credible to us," says Froude, "yet nobler men than the Puritans are not to be found in all English history." Upon literature, however, the dominance of Puritanism was a blighting influ-

ence, which gradually imparted its sober tones to all thinking and writing.

The Elizabethan influence continued in literature through the reign of James I. Several of Shakespeare's greatest plays fall within this period; Ben Jonson lived and wrote until 1637. The pedantic James believed himself to be a poet and the world's most royal patron of letters. But literature decayed with the national life. Large ideals and lofty enthusiasms were fading away into disappointment and despair; romance and dreams were yielding to realities. The foundations of knowledge, as of government and religion, were questioned. Bacon's *Novum Organon* appeared in 1620. The spirit of inquiry was widely aroused and the modern methods of scientific observation and reasoning began. Men now distrusted their emotions and cultivated their intellects. Life became serious and thought became melancholy. Knowledge, once desired for its own sake, was sought for its utilities, and especially for its power as an instrument of warfare.

Change in the National Spirit

Growth of the Scientific Spirit

The civil war was long waged with pamphlets, ponderous and mighty weapons of attack and defense. William Prynne wrote some two hundred, one of which he expanded into a stupendous volume, *Histriomastix*, containing more than one hundred thousand quotations and references to prove that stage-plays are "the invention and chief delights of the Devil," incidentally condemning also for the same reason "Dancing, Music, Laughter, Bonfires, New-Year's gifts, Health-drinking, Long Hair, with sundry other pagan customs." Under such repression the creative zest of literature is lost, and it becomes imitative and artificial, pedantic and freakish. The gorgeous masque with its pompous artificialities represents the artistic taste of the Jacobean period, and the sober spirit of the age is typically expressed in reflections upon man's mortality.

Prynne's Histriomastix, 1633

Such an age is essentially a prose age, and accordingly out of the masses of controversial and learned rubbish emerge our first masterpieces of modern prose. Bacon's *Essays*, published in 1612 and 1625, though generally classified as Elizabethan, chronologically are Jacobean. The finally perfected translation of the Bible, published in 1611, bears the name of King James, by whose direction a committee of about fifty divines revised the *Bishops' Bible* of 1568. This is the *Authorized Version*, which, regarded merely as a literary monument, has exercised through three centuries an unparalleled influence upon the thought and style of authors. It should be noted, however, that the language of this version—a marvel of purity, simplicity, strength, and beauty—is not the language of its own period or of any one period, but is a sifted store of verbal richness inherited from the devout labors of every translator back to Wyclif, "an artificial product, selected with exquisite care, from the sacred felicities of two centuries and a half." Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, a unique offspring of the English Bible, though not published until after the Restoration, belongs properly to the period of Puritan triumph and failure. Before discussing this classic, however, it will be better to examine the works of a group of writers who represent in a peculiar way the intellectual currents of the age.

Authorized Version of the Bible

These writers, though possessing little in common except loyalty to throne and church, qualified by a kindly spirit of tolerance, may be described by the term "quaint." They are decidedly individual, even eccentric. Their books have an antique flavor that blends easily with a quiet humor, enlivened at times with witty epigram. Other piquancies of style and old-fashioned graces make them perennially delightful.

The Eccentrics

Sir Thomas Browne, the most important of the group, was a learned physician of Norwich, where he spent the greater part of his life, with mind detached from the public turmoil of

the day, occupying his leisure in scientific research and philosophical meditation. His *Religio Medici*, or "The Religion of a Physician," is a kind of confession of faith. It originated, apparently, in the desire to remove the old suspicion of physicians in respect to religion, voiced by Chaucer in his portrait of the "Doctour of Phisik," whose "studie was but litel on the Bible." The book is also a protest against the intolerant and intemperate spirit of political and religious controversy. Sir Thomas has no taste for theological disputes, and he doubts the efficacy of a religion that must be "maintained by syllogism and the rule of reason." In other words, he is a mystic who prefers glamour to white light. "I love to lose myself in a mystery," he declares. But he is a scientist, too, and believes in the sovereignty of the reason; and he believes in angels and witches. The disturbance of "sturdy doubts and boisterous objections" in theology he admits, but is inclined to attribute such rebellious thoughts to the "rhetoric of Satan." The placid waters of his thinking are never deeply troubled; faith and reason may always be reconciled, he believes, by "a moderate and peaceable discretion" of mind.

Sir Thomas Browne, 1605–1682

Religio Medici, 1642

Sir Thomas's curiosity led him into strange fields, "the America and untravelled parts of truth," as he called them. His *Vulgar Errors*, a work "quodlibetically constituted," as he would say, is a characteristic mixture of good sense and credulity. But his antiquarianism is best employed in the beautiful little treatise called *Hydriotaphia, or Urn Burial*, suggested by the unearthing of some Roman burial urns in Norfolk. Though intended as a scientific essay, it is almost a prose poem, beginning with a description of the burial customs of all nations and ending with an eloquent discourse upon the vanity of earthly ambition:—

Urn Burial, 1658

> But the iniquity of oblivion blindly scattereth her poppy, and deals with the memory of men without distinction to merit of perpetuity.

Who can but pity the founder of the pyramids? Herostratus lives that burnt the temple of Diana, he is almost lost that built it. Time has spared the epitaph of Adrian's horse, confounded that of himself. In vain we compute our felicities by the advantage of our good names, since bad hath equal durations, and Thersites is like to live as long as Agamemnon without the favor of the everlasting register.

The thought of these books is always on a high plane, but our interest is chiefly in the unique style of the prose, abounding in quaint turns and surprises, and swelling at times into splendid rhythmic cadences. It is a brocaded prose, rich with Roman ornamentation; even the syntax is often Latin. Browne loves to use a sonorous Latin word, even though he must follow it with the translation, as when he speaks of the "funambulous track and narrow path of goodness." And yet of the Latinizing habit of others he remarks, with his usual dry humor: "If elegancy still proceedeth, we shall within few years be fain to learn Latin to understand English." But this is only one of the "beautiful obliquities" which Charles Lamb was so fond of in these books, and no one who has once experienced their charm would have them different.

A Unique Style

The most famous of several eminent preachers of the period was Jeremy Taylor, whom Emerson calls "the Shakespeare of divines." His *Liberty of Prophesying* is an eloquent argument for religious toleration and ranks with Milton's *Areopagitica* as a noble plea for freedom of opinion. *Holy Living* and the more beautiful *Holy Dying* are among our best works of religious prose. Taylor's style represents the prevailing taste for rhetorical magnificence, presenting a singular mingling of gorgeousness and simplicity. Here is an illustration of his elaborate similes:—

Jeremy Taylor, 1613–1667

So we sometimes espy a bright cloud formed into an irregular figure; when it is observed by unskillful and fantastic travelers, it looks like a centaur to some, and as a castle to others; some tell that they saw an army with banners, and it signifies war; but another wiser than this fellow, says it looks for all the world like a flock of sheep,

and foretells plenty; and all the while it is nothing but a shining cloud, by its own mobility and the activity of a wind cast into a contingent and inartificial shape; so it is in this great mystery of our religion, in which some espy strange things which God intended not, and others see not what God has plainly told.

Another enthusiastic antiquarian like Browne was Thomas Fuller, the most delightfully incongruous clergyman in literature. The solemnity of the age could not subdue the humorous vivacity of his nature. His mind was perpetually bubbling over with witticisms and his quaint facetiousness was exercised even upon the most sacred subjects. He would have joked the Evangelists, had he met them, but without irreverence. He dearly loved a good story and could not resist the temptation of a pun. He was one of the last and best of the euphuists. Of an Old Testament city he remarks: "Aphek, whose walls, falling down, gave death and gravestones to 27,000 of Benhadad's soldiers." Withal he was full of the milk of human kindness, uttering never a bitter word even of his enemies. While trudging about the country as chaplain in the King's army, he was eagerly gathering material for his *Worthies of England*, his most characteristic work, which we now read not for its facts, but for its jests and anecdotes. *The Holy and Profane States* is a collection of essays and "characters" real and imaginary, in which the humorist and the preacher work together in quaint fashion. *Good Thoughts in Bad Times*, a miscellany of pithy essays, meditations, prayers, and precepts, contains much that is persuasive and consoling in all times.

Thomas Fuller, 1608–1661

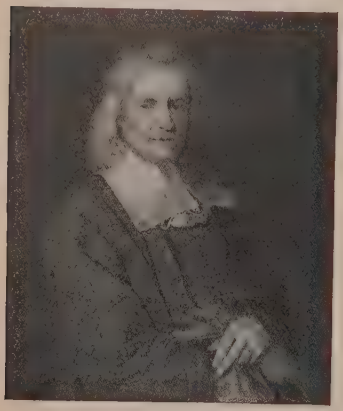
Worthies of England, 1662

A representative work of the period, and perhaps the most interesting literary curiosity in the language, is Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, a vast jumble of quotations,—Latin, Greek, and English,—through which trickles the wise or witty comment of the author. Burton was an Oxford scholar and divine, and his hobby and life study was melancholy, "the

kinds, causes, symptoms, prognostics, and several cures of it." This theme he elaborated with a sort of ludicrous perversion of philosophic method. Whether he expected to be taken seriously or humorously is not quite clear. The book was enormously popular, and accordingly long exercised a vicious influence upon the development of prose. Nevertheless, says Saintsbury, "all fit readers of English literature have loved him."

Robert Burton, 1577–1640

The most genuinely lovable of these literary eccentrics is Isaac Walton. His little prose idyl, *The Complete Angler*, is one of the sunniest nooks in the byways of literature, and his *Lives* of Hooker, Donne, Herbert, and others are little masterpieces in a form of writing before untried. The importunate clamor of public strife did not disturb the simple philosophy of this amiable angler. When others went to the wars to fight for conscience or the king, Walton placidly went a-fishing. And we envy "Venator" and "Auceps" the privilege of going afield with him and listening to his gentle gossip. When the fish do not bite, the anglers wander in the redolent pastures or by hedgerows of hawthorn bloom, watch the larks busy with their "heavenly employment," or listen to the milkmaid's songs, and betimes refresh themselves at an inn with the hostess's "best barley wine," drinking a health "to all who love the honest art of angling." The abiding charm of *The Complete Angler* is not alone in its simplicity and genuine-



SIR ISAAC WALTON

Isaac Walton, 1593–1683

ness, and its fresh, wholesome out-of-door air, but chiefly in the genial, engaging personality of the author. It is one of the few books that have obtained an "immortality of affection."

Jacobean poetry is Elizabethan poetry growing old, reflective, and intellectual. There is less spontaneous creativeness and careless grace. Outside dramatic poetry, the most specific Elizabethan influence was that exerted by Spenser's poems. Most prominent in the "Spenserian School" were Giles and Phineas Fletcher, sons of the author of the sonnet sequence *Licia*, and William Browne. These poets, accepted by their contemporaries as masters of the craft, imitated Spenser lovingly, but in vain. Giles's *Christ's Victory and Triumph*, on the theme of Milton's *Paradise Regained*, is not without merit, but the occasional passages of sublime poetry are almost lost in the rubbish of conceits and mannerisms. Phineas's *Purple Island* is an absurdly ingenious and elaborately moralized allegory of the human body. His *Piscatory Eclogues*, which Walton could hardly have read without going to sleep, and Browne's *Britannia's Pastorals* and *Shepherd's Pipe* are far-away echoes of Spenser's pastoral poetry that seldom arrest the attention of modern ears. At best the poems of this school are but "sunken stepping-stones from Spenser to Milton."

Spenserian Imitators

Lyric poetry continued to flourish vigorously and joyously, in spite of the approaching gloom, but it fell into bad habits under the baneful influence of one of the most injurious and quite the most perverse poet of the age, John Donne. Though born in 1573 and associated with the great Elizabethans, his work is post-Elizabethan in its character. His poems, after circulating many years in manuscript, were published in 1633, two years after his death.

John Donne, 1573–1631

Donne's life, like his poetry, was full of discords and extremes. Born in the Catholic faith, the son of a wealthy mer-

chant, he studied at both universities, renounced his faith and all creeds, joined the expedition of Essex to Cadiz, became secretary to Lord Edgerton, whose young niece he married (getting himself into prison for his impudence), struggled with poverty for years, was finally persuaded by James I to take orders in the church, became Dean of St. Paul's, and was soon regarded as the greatest preacher in England.

In his poetry he rejected the ideality and "linked sweetness long drawn out" of Spenser and wrote in rough and tuneless measures. In place of the well-worn classical decoration he used realistic imagery from contemporary life. But he applied to common things a subtlety of thought that often produced meaningless obscurity. He delighted especially in inventing curious and far-fetched conceits, and similes stretched to unnatural significance, making his illustrations more important than the things illustrated. A good man is compared to a telescope, lover's tears are like globes with maps of the world on them. The souls of two lovers are like a pair of compasses:—

A New Style in Poetry

> If they be two, they are two so
> As stiff twin compasses are two;
> Thy soul, the fix't foot, makes no show
> To move, but doth if th' other do.
>
> And, though it in the center sit,
> Yet, when the other far doth roam,
> It leans and harkens after it,
> And grows erect as that comes home.

Dr. Johnson called Donne and his disciples the "metaphysical poets," who were "more desirous of being admired than understood." Hardly any poet escaped this new bewitchment; even Milton had a touch of the malady in his youth. But Donne was not always fantastical, and could write clear and melodious lines like these:—

> I long to talk with some old lover's ghost,
> Who died before the god of love was born.

Sudden and brilliant flashes here and there belie his theories. Ben Jonson said that "Donne, for not keeping of accent, deserved hanging," and yet was constrained to regard him as "the first poet in the world in some things." He was aggressively singular—a seventeenth-century Browning—and in trying to be original he became eccentric.

The Influence of Donne

His contemporary fame and influence seem now almost incomprehensible. "What he gave to poetry," says Gosse, "for what he destroyed was almost wholly deplorable. For sixty years the evil taint of Donne rested on us, and our tradition is not free from it yet. He is the father of all that is exasperating, affected, and 'metaphysical' in English poetry."

The new fashion of "topsy-turvified conceits" was especially prevalent in a group of religious poets, who in spite of their bad taste wrote a few very beautiful sacred lyrics. These poets were deeply religious, but not in the austere manner of the Puritans, being true to the traditions of royalty and loyal to the Church of England or to Rome. George Herbert, of the noble family of the Pembrokes, was distinguished at Cambridge as a scholar, became public orator of the university, was the friend of Bacon and Donne, and enjoyed favor at court. After seriously meditating the choice between a secular and a priestly life, he took holy orders and became rector of the little church of Bemerton, near Salisbury, now a shrine of pilgrimage for reverent admirers of the poet. His life was pure and saintly; the "holy Mr. Herbert," Walton calls him.

George Herbert, 1593–1633

His single volume of lyrics, *The Temple*, is a religious classic, pervaded with a strong spiritual fervor and an inspiring sweetness of faith. He renounced "the vanity of those many love-poems that are daily writ and consecrated to Venus," but accepted the art of the current love-lyric and employed it in expressing the beauty of holiness and the love of God. Adopting Donne as his model, he labored with loving zeal upon his precious little lyrics,

The Temple, 1631

molding and polishing, and packing them with thought and symbolic significance that often resulted in intricate obscurity and mere poetical puzzles. His art is deliberate and carefully meditated; each poem has its definite structural plan. *Heaven*, an echo poem, *Jesu*, *A Wreath*, and *Hope* are extreme examples of his mental crotchets.

On the other hand, a poem like *Virtue* shows that he was capable of simple and graceful verses:—

> Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright,
> The bridal of the earth and sky;
> The dew shall weep thy fall to-night,
> For thou must die.
>
> Sweet rose, whose hue, angry and brave,
> Bids the rash gazer wipe his eye;
> Thy root is ever in its grave,
> And thou must die.

Richard Crashaw, 1613?–1650? Henry Vaughan, 1622?–1695

Two disciples of Herbert, Richard Crashaw and Henry Vaughan, excelled him at times in sublime religious emotions expressed in fluent verse, but generally fell far below him for want of his self-criticism and restraint. There are passages in Crashaw in which his imagination flames heavenward with startling beauty, but it quickly tumbles to earth in some fantastic conceit. It hardly seems possible that one who described the eyes of the Magdalen as—

> Two walking baths, two weeping motions,
> Portable and compendious oceans,

could have also written that pretty whimsy, *Wishes:*—

> Whoe'er she be,
> That not impossible she,
> That shall command my heart and me.

Crashaw was a mystic, and through his vague and vapory ecstasies the religious fire of his soul seldom burned clear. Vaughan also was a mystic, in whose meditations in the pres-

ence of nature a forenote of Wordsworth is sounded. He sought to express in his poetry the union of natural and divine beauty, but succeeded only in occasional gleams of inspired insight. Attention has been attracted to these mystical religious poets by the discovery of a new member of the group, Thomas Traherne, whose *Poems* and *Centuries of Meditations* have recently been published.

A respectful word must be given to William Habington, whose once celebrated *Castara* poems seem to have originated in a pure and genuine passion. His religious poems are fluent, sincere, and sometimes poetical. George Wither must also be included here, an austere Puritan poet who had a true lyrical vein, as proved by the beautiful "Shall I, wasting in despair." He began his career of voluminous authorship with satires and pastorals, faint murmurs in the Spenserian manner, and ended with devotional poetry that he feared to make beautiful lest it should be sinful.

William Habington, 1605–1654? George Wither, 1588–1667

The lyric poetry of the age is more fully represented by the Cavalier Poets, so called for their connection with the court of Charles I. These gay songsters were the last poets of chivalry, representing ideals of love and honor that were passing away. Roisterers, generally, with good manners and bad morals, they could fight a duel or write a song with the same deft grace; care-free children of the fleeting day, with no yesterdays or to-morrows in their thought; heedless of the rumbling thunders of the approaching storm, and trilling their dainty rhymes of love and gallantry, as if life were an endless holiday. They produced nothing that is great, but much that is delicate and graceful, a song pure in sentiment and perfect in melody now and then dropping from their lips as if by happy accident. They cultivated their art as they cultivated their manners, not seriously, but skillfully. They could be both charming and preposterous, now celebrating a mistress's eyebrows, with no end of pretty and meaning-

The Cavalier Poets

less conceits, and now striking out suddenly, with rapier-like flash, some neatly carved verse of beautiful and noble thought.

Thomas Carew, gentleman of the Privy Chamber, and poetically one of the "sons of Ben," wrote some of the most polished and melodious lyrics of the period. He was careful to give a coherent structure to his songs, where his companions were content with clever stanzas carelessly strung together. Admirable examples of his mastery of the lyric form are the songs, "Ask me no more where Jove bestows," and "Give me more love or more disdain."

Thomas Carew, 1598–1639?

Sir John Suckling, wealthy, generous, and popular, was one of the brightest of the King Charles wits,—"incomparably ready at reparteeing; the greatest gallant of his time, the greatest gamester both for bowling and cards, so that no shopkeeper would trust him for sixpence." A typical Cavalier, he raised a troop of horse for the King, engaged in a political plot, fled to the Continent, and died in exile and misery. His poems, like himself, are full of reckless gaiety and graceful impudence. Thus he sings of *Constancy:*—

Sir John Suckling, 1609–1641

> Out upon it, I have loved
> Three whole days together;
> And am like to love three more,
> If it prove fair weather.

The incomparable *Ballad upon a Wedding* and the song, "Why so pale and wan, fond lover?" represent Suckling at his best.

Like Suckling, Richard Lovelace was loyal to the King's cause; he served in the army, was twice imprisoned by order of Parliament, lost his estates by government confiscation, and died in poverty. In style his poems are generally careless, slovenly, and imitative of the worst quirks of Donne, and in substance they reflect without shame the vices of a dissolute court. But he sometimes touched the highest notes of lyric music. His

Richard Lovelace, 1618–1658

two little masterpieces, *To Lucasta, on Going to the Wars*, containing the lines—

> I could not love thee, dear, so much,
> Loved I not honor more,

and *To Althea from Prison*, will keep his memory forever green in the anthologies.

Greatest of this school of gay poets is Robert Herrick, of whose real personality little is known, even though he wrote some twenty-five poems "On Himself." He was born in Cheapside, London, in 1591, attended school at Westminster, and at fifteen was apprenticed to his father's trade of goldsmith, but somehow escaped from this thraldom and went to Cambridge, obtaining his degree of A.M. in 1620. He spent the next nine years in London, living by his wits and waiting for court favor, fraternizing with other young poets at "those lyric feasts" at the Mermaid, the Dog, or the Triple Tun, in the worship of "Saint Ben," as we see in his *Prayer to Ben Jonson:*—

Robert Herrick, 1591–1674

> When I a verse shall make,
> Know I have pray'd thee,
> For old religion's sake,
> Saint Ben, to aid me.

In 1629 Charles I gave him the vicarage of Dean Prior, in Devonshire. Here he lived nineteen years in unwilling exile, which was fortunate for poetry, however, for in this rural seclusion he gathered such "golden apples" as he would never have found in the streets and coffee-houses of his beloved London. Deprived of his living by the Long Parliament, he returned to London, published his *Hesperides* in 1648, and on the accession of Charles II was restored to Dean Prior, and there died in 1674.

Herrick is one of the minor masters of poetry, great in little things. His poems number more than twelve hundred; many of

them are mere quatrains in size, and many are worthless trifles. Enough, however, prove him a superior artist. His art is exquisite, in its delicacy and precision like the art of the cameo-cutter; but with masterly skill the art is concealed in the simplicity of form and substance.

Herrick's Art and Feeling

In feeling, he is as much a pagan as Theocritus or Horace; he loves beauty, warm sunshine, and flowers and rose-cheeked maids. *Carpe diem*, enjoy the day while it lasts, he seems to say; life is short, and "we shall grow old apace":—

> Then while time serves, and we are but decaying,
> Come, my Corinna! come, let's go a Maying.

His poems are full of the sweetness and color of the soil from which they grew.

> I sing of brooks, of blossoms, birds and bowers,
> Of April, May, of June, and July-flowers;
> I sing of May-poles, hock-carts, wassails, wakes,
> Of bridegrooms, brides, and of their bridal-cakes.

Thus he begins the inviting table of contents for the *Hesperides*, and the reader is not disappointed in the promised delights. "There is no English poet," says Aldrich, "so thoroughly English as Herrick. He painted the country life of his own time as no other has painted it at any time. When you open his book, the breath of the rural year fans your cheek; the pages seem to exhale wildwood and meadow smells, as if sprigs of tansy and lavender had been shut up in the volume and forgotten." Fair examples of his dainty and melodious inventions are *To Meadows*, *To Blossoms*, *To Daffodils*, *Cherry-Ripe*, *Music*, and especially the admirable *Corinna's Going a-Maying*, which is truly "a little masterpiece drenched with the pungent dews of a spring morning."

Hesperides, 1648

Herrick classified his poems as "Human and Divine." In the

first class are some that are too human, "unbaptised rhymes," he called them apologetically. But Herrick was a poet by nature and a parson only by exigency. The sacred poems, or "Noble Numbers," are reverent and sincere, but lacking in divine fervor; "he sings lustily in church, but he sings to the old heathen tunes." Spiritual lukewarmness is his limitation. His pretty flights are never far above the earth.

Limited Spiritual Nature

The name of Edmund Waller is generally regarded as one of the lesser landmarks in the history of English poetry. In the extravagant admiration of his own age, however, he was "the parent of English verse." Dryden says of him: "He first made writing easily an art, first showed us to conclude the sense, most commonly in distichs, which in the verse of those before him runs on for so many lines together that the reader is out of breath to overtake it." This means that Waller invented the classic English couplet, which was perfected by Dryden and Pope. Dryden was not entirely correct, for others were experimenting with the couplet in the endeavor to reform English prosody. The poets had become careless in their versification, disregardful of rhythm, even of grammar. The restraint of classic models that Ben Jonson advocated had proved ineffective, and the formal structure of verse, its technique, now needed to be established by accepted rules and native models. Waller, representing this newly awakened desire for "correctness," worked for smoothness, precision, and terseness of language. He made of the couplet a polished instrument of poetic expression, by giving to it a completeness of thought and balanced rhythm within itself. How this little instrument bewitched the poets of the next generation we shall soon see.

Edmund Waller, 1605–1687

The Couplet and Poetic Reform

Waller was a busy politician, an easy-going patriot, and one of the brightest "wits" of the time. He sang the praises of Charles I, then of Cromwell, and then of Charles II. When

reminded by the King of the doubtful character of his compliment, he replied: "Poets, sir, succeed better in fiction than in truth." As a reformer of verse he belonged to the next age, but as a writer of songs, particularly of the incomparable "Go, lovely Rose," he stood with the last of the Elizabethans. The celebrated love-poems addressed to Lady Dorothy Sidney, his "Sacharissa," seem to enshrine a real passion, as serious, probably, as was possible to a Caroline wit. The visitor at Penshurst to-day, while dreamily reviving this old romance in the shadows of "Sacharissa's Walk," is inclined to credit with sincerity such lines as these:—

Personal Career and Qualities

> Ye lofty Beeches! tell this matchless dame,
> That if together ye fed all one flame,
> It could not equalize the hundredth part
> Of what her eyes have kindled in my heart.

Among others who had a hand in shaping the classic couplet were Sir John Denham, Sir William Davenant, and Abraham Cowley, all, like Waller, connecting links between two periods. Denham is remembered only by a single poem, *Cooper's Hill*, and mainly for four verses of that poem in an apostrophe to the Thames:—

John Denham, 1615–1668

> O could I flow like thee, and make thy stream
> My great example, as it is my theme!
> Though deep, yet clear, though gentle, yet not dull,
> Strong without rage, without o'erflowing full.

The beauty of these placid and pellucid lines is indisputable, and they present the ideal of direct and intelligible expression at which the reform movement aimed. Denham's polished antitheses and attempts at epigrammatic conciseness are definite anticipations of Pope. Jonson's *Penshurst*, Denham's *Cooper's Hill*, and Pope's *Windsor Forest* are nature poems of a type that

was soon to be very common, composed of philosophical musings and generalized description of natural scenery.

Abraham Cowley affords a melancholy example of faded glories. He was regarded by his contemporaries as a greater poet than Milton and now he is seldom read except as a duty. His poetry is not without interest, however, which is increased by familiarity with his attractive personality. He was a fervent Loyalist, and served as secretary to the court while in exile in France, and was shabbily neglected by the ungrateful King after the Restoration. At the age of fifteen he published a volume of poems appropriately entitled *Poetical Blossoms*. A copy of Spenser first filled his head, he says, "with such chimes of verse as have never since left ringing there." But the ringing was faint, for in *The Mistress*, a collection of frigid love-poems, he fell into abject servitude to Donne and became one of the worst inventors of tortured similes and ingenious conceits of fancy.

Abraham Cowley, 1618–1667

His *Pindarique Odes*, which are related to Pindar, the Greek father of the ode, in little except the name, set a fashion that was widely followed in the next century and carried to impressive dignity by Wordsworth and Tennyson. This Cowleyan form of ode ignores the classic divisions of strophe, antistrophe, and epode, and rambles through long and short stanzas composed of long and short lines, variously rhymed, according to no rule except that of the poet's fancy. His *Davideis*, written in the new style of couplet, was an ambitious attempt to make a grand epic out of Bible material. But the preface is more interesting than the poem; it is an eloquent plea for sacred poetry, which was answered eleven years later by *Paradise Lost*. The little volume of *Essays* is still read with pleasure. They are written in an easy and natural style quite different from the affectations and ponderosities of the prevailing prose style.

The Pindaric Ode

The one Puritan poet besides Milton who gained distinction was Andrew Marvell, Milton's friend and assistant in the Latin

Secretaryship to the Commonwealth. Though most prominent in his satires of men and events in the reign of Charles II, his true place as a poet is with Herrick and Lovelace. His lyrics express especially the refinement of classic culture and a true delight in nature. The "delicious solitude" described in *The Garden* has something of the lure of Horace's Sabine Farm. *A Horatian Ode upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland* is one of the very best representatives in English of the form and spirit of this classic species of poetry.

Andrew Marvell, 1621–1678

John Bunyan

1628–1688

Among the Puritans were two authors of the highest order of genius, Bunyan and Milton, differing widely in their lives and characters, but alike in the spiritual exaltation of their minds. The one represents Puritanism in its homely and popular aspects, its narrow intensity, its self-denials and exclusive contemplation of the destiny of the soul; the other represents its finest culture and most generous sentiments, its loftiest ideals and the imperial dignity of its spiritual conceptions of life.

John Bunyan was born in the village of Elstow, near Bedford, in 1628. His father was a tinker, and he himself became a mender of pots and kettles by due inheritance. His parents were of "that rank that is meanest and most despised," he says, but "God put it into their hearts to put me to school to learn me to read and write." What he learned, however, he soon lost "almost utterly." This is all we know about his early education. Later his education was completed in the Bible and Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*. His real education, however, was his religious experience, which is a wonderful story, as related in his autobiographical *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*.

Youth and Education

From early childhood he had few equals, he says, "for cursing, swearing, lying, and blaspheming," and was the "ringleader" of his companions "in all manner of vice and ungodliness." For this reason the Lord "did scare and affright me with fearful dreams" and "thoughts of the fearful torments of hell-fire." This picture of his early wickedness was drawn after his conversion, and is undoubtedly exaggerated. According to his own account, among the worst of his "ungodly practices" were dancing, bell-ringing, and the game of tip-cat. It is still the pride of young men in English country parishes to ring the bells for church service, and this was one of Bunyan's sins. "I had taken much delight in ringing, but my conscience beginning to be tender, I thought such practice was but vain, and therefore forced myself to leave it, yet my mind hankered." So he would go to the steeple-house and look on, though he "durst not ring."

History of a Puritan Conscience

JOHN BUNYAN

At about his twentieth year, it was his "mercy to light upon a wife whose father was counted godly." They were "as poor as poor might be," with not so much as "a dish or spoon" betwixt them; but she brought him as a dower two religious books in which he found "some things that were somewhat pleasing," and "she also would be often telling of me what a godly man her father was." Then he began to read the Bible, "especially the historical part thereof; for as for Paul's epistles and such

like scriptures, I could not away with them." And then he "fell to some outward reformation," went to church, kept the commandments, and thought he was pleasing God "as well as any man in England"; and yet all this while he "knew not Christ." His mind was "assaulted" with scruples, doubts, and fears: Was he "elected"? Had he sinned away "the day of grace"? And so every twinge of this morbidly sensitive soul is described with the intense feeling and vivid imagination that made Bunyan so powerful a writer. "It is a picture of fearful fascination," says Canon Venables.

The Struggle of Faith and Doubt

At last he found peace. The sense of salvation came to him like a "sudden noise of wind rushing in at the window, but very pleasant." He united with the Baptists of Bedford, and soon discovered his "gift" for exhorting, which he exercised at first in private, "with much weakness and infirmity," and then as a regular preacher, teaching the people wherever they might gather, on the village green, in barns, and in the woods. The fame of the tinker preacher spread rapidly, throngs pressing to hear him wherever he appeared. But with the return of Charles II, the Act of Uniformity was revived and Bunyan's preaching was a violation of the law of the land. He was arrested on the charge that he "devilishly and pertinaciously abstained from coming to church to hear Divine service, and was a common upholder of unlawful meetings and conventicles," the regular form of indictment for dissenters. The judges were inclined to be lenient and offered him his freedom if he would promise not to preach in public. This he refused to do, and was committed to the Bedford jail, where he remained twelve years.

Bunyan as a Preacher

In 1672 the laws against Nonconformists were suspended and Bunyan was set free; but in 1675 he was again sent to jail for six months, and during this imprisonment, it is believed, he wrote *Pilgrim's Progress*. The rest of his days were spent happily in the ministry of faith and good works. His life ended

with a characteristic act of charity. Making a long journey on horseback to reconcile a father and son who had quarreled, he was caught in a drenching rain and stricken with fever. In ten days he died, at the house of a friend in London.

Bunyan's publications are numerous, including the usual pamphlets of theological controversy, in which he vigorously engaged. His one great masterpiece we probably owe to the detachment of prison life, which was favorable for dreaming the dreams of his wonderful allegory. *Pilgrim's Progress* is an epic of the human soul, a vision of its pilgrimage through an earthly career of temptations and trials to its eternal home. The experiences of humanity are typified in the adventures of Christian as, bowed down with his pack of sins, he makes his way through the Slough of Despond into the straight and narrow path that leads over the Hill of Difficulty, past Doubting Castle, through the Valley of Humiliation and Vanity Fair, into Emmanuel's Land, and is led at last by the Shining Ones into the Celestial City. The people whom he meets on the way are all familiar: Mr. Worldly Wiseman, Mr. Two-tongues, Mr. Gripe-man, "a schoolmaster in Love-gain, which is a market town in the county of Coveting," Mr. Talkative, "son of one Say-well," and the whole motley company, each one of whom Bunyan had known in and about Bedford. Incidents and scenes, as well as characters, are often taken directly from his experience. The trial of Faithful before Judge Hate-good is not an exaggeration of the manner of administering justice to Nonconformists in the days of Charles II:—

Pilgrim's Progress, 1678

When this Pickthank had told his tale, the Judge directed his speech to the prisoner at the bar, saying, Thou runagate, heretic, and traitor, hast thou heard what these honest gentlemen have witnessed against thee?

Faith. May I speak a few words in my own defense?

Judge. Sirrah! Sirrah! thou deservest to live no longer, but to be slain immediately upon the place; yet, that all men may see our gentleness towards thee, let us hear what thou, vile runagate, hast to say.

The chief sources of the charm and power of *Pilgrim's Progress* are its naturalness and its intense sincerity. Its simple, homely style, graphic and humorous, shaped in the beautiful language of the Bible with a blending of the speech of the soil, is a marvel of unconscious genius. Often in whole pages not a word of more than two syllables will be found.

Sources of its Power

The success of allegory depends upon the ability of the author to make abstractions appear like concrete qualities. In this respect Bunyan's success is supreme. "No other allegorist," declares Macaulay, "has ever been able to touch the heart and to make his abstractions objects of terror, of pity, and of love."

Probably no book except the Bible has been so widely read as *Pilgrim's Progress*. One hundred thousand copies were issued in Bunyan's lifetime and it is now translated into more than a hundred languages and dialects. "While theological folios," writes Froude, "once devoured as manna from Heaven, now lie on the bookshelves dead as Egyptian mummies, this book is wrought into the mind and memory of every well-conditioned English or American child; while the matured man, furnished with all the knowledge which literature can teach him, still finds the adventures of Christian as charming as the adventures of Ulysses or Æneas." The story is true to the life and character of its own time, and it will be true to all times while there is a belief in morality, religion, and the soul.

The *Second Part* of *Pilgrim's Progress*, in which Christiana and her children make the same pilgrimage, is inferior to the first part, although it makes many admirable additions to Bunyan's collection of portraits and character sketches. *The Holy War* is an allegory on the theme of Milton's epics, the fall and redemption of man, but it lacks reality and human interest. Its vast theological spaces are filled with shadowy characters that never take on real flesh and blood like Pilgrim's companions. The allegory does not translate itself into common experience.

The Holy War

The only other work of Bunyan that still invites reading is *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman*, which was intended as a complement to *Pilgrim's Progress*, picturing the earthly pilgrimage of an unredeemed soul. With a vivid realism, so real as to be frequently gross and unsavory, it tells the story of Mr. Badman, who "went to school with the devil from his childhood to the end of his life." He is a vulgar hypocrite and scoundrel, who enjoys all the pleasures of the unregenerate, succeeds in business by trickery and fraud, treads with perfect content the primrose path to the everlasting bonfire, and dies in peace, giving no sign of repentance,—the most tragic end, as Bunyan regarded it, that could come to his hero, in view of what awaited him in the next life. The story is a precursor of the realistic novels of Defoe and Fielding and gives color to the claim that Bunyan is virtually the first modern English novelist.

The Story of Mr. Badman

PROGRAM OF WORK

CLASS READING. BROWNE: *Religio Medici:* Theological Controversy, pt. I, secs. 6, 9; Divinity of Nature, sec. 16; Spirits and Angels, secs. 33–35; Charity, pt. II, secs. 1–3; Pride, sec. 8; *Urn Burial*, ch. v. Read the whole essay, if possible.

FULLER: *The Holy State:* The Good Schoolmaster, bk. II, ch. xvi (Garnett); Life of Sir Francis Drake, bk. II, ch. xxii (Manly, Century).

BURTON: *Anatomy of Melancholy:* Definition of Melancholy, pt. I, sec. 1, memb. 3, subsec. 1; Nature of Devils, pt. I, sec. 2, memb. 1, subsec. 2; Heroical Love causeth Melancholy, pt. III, sec. 2, memb. 1, subsec. 1 (Manly).

WALTON: *Complete Angler:* ch. i (Manly); ch. iv (Century). If interesting, read the whole.

DONNE: *Song: Sweetest love, I do not go; The Will; Love's Deity; A Hymn to God the Father; Lovers' Infiniteness;* from *The Second Anniversary.*

HERBERT: *Virtue; Love; The Pulley; The Quip; The Collar; Employment; The Pearl; The Altar.*

CRASHAW: *Wishes; The Flaming Heart; The Holy Nativity.*

VAUGHAN: *The Retreat; The World; Peace; Beyond the Veil.*

HABINGTON: *To Roses; To Cupid, upon a Dimple in Castara's Cheek; The Description of Castara.*

WITHER: *Shall I, wasting in Despair; When we are upon the Seas; A Rocking Hymn.*

CAREW: *Song: Ask me no more; A Prayer to the Wind; Disdain Returned; Celia Singing; In Praise of his Mistress; The Protestation.*

SUCKLING: *Why so pale and wan, fond lover; A Ballad upon a Wedding; Song: I prithee send me back my heart; Constancy.*

LOVELACE: *To Lucasta, on Going to the Wars; To Althea from Prison; The Rose.*

HERRICK: *Corinna's Going a-Maying; The Rock of Rubies; To Blossoms; To Daffodils; To Anthea; Cherry-Ripe; An Ode for Ben Jonson; To the Rose; The Bag of the Bee; The Litany; Music; To the Virgins; The Hock-Cart, or Harvest Home.*

WALLER: *Go, Lovely Rose; On a Girdle; The Story of Phœbus and Daphne Applied;* from *The Battle of the Summer's Islands.*

DENHAM: *Praise of the Thames,* from *Cooper's Hill.*

COWLEY: *A Wish; The Swallow; The Wish; To Mr. Hobbes* (A "Pindarique Ode"); *Essays:* Of Myself; Danger of Procrastination.

MARVELL: *The Garden; To his Coy Mistress; A Horatian Ode upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland.*

These poems will be found in Ward, Bronson, Century, and Schelling's *Seventeenth Century Lyrics.*

BUNYAN'S *Pilgrim's Progress:* First part entire, or selections in Manly, Century, Oxford, or Craik.

LITERARY HISTORY. Saintsbury's *Elizabethan Literature;* Courthope, vol. III, chs. x, xi, xii; Cambridge, vol. VII, ch. i (Cavalier Lyrists), ch. ii (The Sacred Poets), ch. iii (Writers of the Couplet), ch. vii (Bunyan), ch. x (Browne, Fuller, Walton); Dowden's *Puritan and Anglican;* Masterman's *Age of Milton;* Reed's *English Lyrical Poetry,* ch. v; Gosse's *Sir Thomas Browne* (E. M. L.); Pater's *Appreciations* (Browne); Stephen's *Hours in a Library* (Browne); Lowell's *Latest Literary Essays* (Walton); Gosse's *Life and Letters of John Donne;* Dowden's *New Studies in Literature* (Donne); Gosse's *Jacobean Poets,* ch. iii (Donne); Hale's *Selections from Herrick* (Athenæum Series); Palgrave's *Selections from Herrick* (G. T. S.); Aldrich's *Ponkapog Papers* (Herrick); Swinburne's *Studies in Prose and Poetry* (Herrick); More's *Shelburne Essays,* Fourth Series (Herbert); Palmer's *Life and Works of Herbert;* Palgrave's *Landscape in Poetry,* 160–165 (Vaughan); Gosse's *Jeremy Taylor* (E. M. L.); Birrell's *Marvell* (E. M. L.); Critical Introductions in Ward's *Poets* and Craik's *Prose.*

Froude's *Bunyan* (E. M. L.); Venables's *Bunyan* (G. W. S.); Brown's *Life, Times and Works of Bunyan;* Woodberry's *Makers of Literature;* Macaulay's *Essays.*

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND. Green, ch. viii; Cheyney, chs. xiv, xv; Traill, vol. IV, ch. xiv (Civil War and Commonwealth);

Harrison's *Oliver Cromwell;* Gardiner's *Oliver Cromwell;* Tullock's *English Puritanism and its Leaders;* Gardiner's *The First Two Stuarts and the Puritan Revolution; Selections from Clarendon's History of the Rebellion*, edited by Boyle (Cl. Press); Masson's *Life and Times of John Milton;* Mrs. Mead's *Milton's England;* Trevelyan's *England under the Stuarts.*

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION AND RESEARCH

1. The contrast between Puritan and Cavalier. 2. Lights and shadows of the Puritan character (Macaulay's *Milton;* Taine, bk. II, ch. v, sec. 5). 3. Reasons for the Puritans' attitude toward the arts, especially the drama.

4. Relation of the Bible to the national changes of the period (Green, ch. viii, sec. 1). 5. Account for the difference in style between the Authorized Version and other prose works of the period.

6. The beauties and affectations of Browne's style. 7. Extract some of the good things from Fuller's *Worthies.* 8. Account for the undying popularity of Walton's *Complete Angler.*

9. Explain and illustrate the singularities of Donne's poetry (See Johnson's *Cowley*, in *Lives of the Poets*). 10. Make a study of Herbert's verse workmanship (Palmer's *George Herbert*, vol. I, 121–167). 11. Personal and poetical characteristics of the Cavalier Poets. 12. Examine minutely Lovelace's *To Althea from Prison* for beauties and defects.

13. The prevailing spirit of Herrick's poetry. 14. Compare Herrick's delicate lyric art with the art of Thomas Bailey Aldrich. 15. Show that Herrick is "preëminently the poet of flowers." 16. Origin of the classic, or Augustan, couplet (Gosse's *From Shakespeare to Pope*). 17. Compare Cowley's prose style with that of Browne. 18. Compare the form of Cowley's Pindaric ode with that of the real Pindaric ode in Gray's *The Bard.*

19. Source and character of Bunyan's style. 20. Compare Bunyan's use of allegory with Spenser's. 21. Why was *Pilgrim's Progress* superior to all the other works of Bunyan?

CHAPTER XI

JOHN MILTON

1608–1674

The position of Milton was one of peculiar isolation. He was the supreme poet of Puritanism, and yet among the Puritans he was a lonely figure. His life stretched between two great literary epochs, to neither of which he belonged. He was born while Shakespeare was writing his great tragedies, and he died in a period that had forgotten Shakespeare and repudiated his art. With the poets of his own time, Herrick, Suckling, and the others, he had nothing in common, and scorned them as "vulgar amorists," and "rhyming parasites." The great epic, upon which his world fame rests, he wrote while living in darkness and silence, an exile in his own land. It was singularly true, as Wordsworth sang of him:—

A Lonely Figure

> Thy soul was like a star and dwelt apart.

John Milton was born in Bread Street, London, December 9, 1608. Near by in the same street was the Mermaid Tavern, and we may easily believe that Ben Jonson and Shakespeare sometimes paused to admire the large-eyed child. The home was in the very heart of old London, near Bow Bells and St. Paul's Cathedral, with its surrounding booksellers' stalls, and St. Paul's School, where Milton prepared for the university. There were two other children, an elder sister and a younger brother. The father

The Milton Home

was a prosperous scrivener, and a Puritan of the earlier type, whose religion did not prohibit enjoyment of the beautiful. He was a lover of the fine arts, something of a poet, an accomplished musician, and a composer of hymn tunes, two of which at least, "York" and "Norwich," are still familiar. In music

JOHN MILTON

the young Milton was well trained; his favorite instrument was the organ, whose tones are heard in all his poetry.

He was early destined by his father, he writes, "for the pursuits of literature, which I seized with such eagerness that from the twelfth year of my age I scarcely ever went from my lessons to bed before midnight." And he adds: "When I had acquired

various tongues, and also some not insignificant taste for the sweetness of philosophy, he sent me to Cambridge." This acquirement in the "tongues" consisted of Latin, Greek, French, Italian, and some knowledge of Hebrew.

Education

He entered Christ's College in 1625, the year of the accession of Charles I, and remained seven years. Owing to an appearance of feminine refinement, and "a certain haughty delicacy" in tastes and morals, he was nicknamed "the lady of Christ's." But like other students of seventeen he was human, and for quarreling with his tutor he was sent home. He took his punishment easily, however, as appears in a letter to his school friend Diodati. He professes to "care not to revisit the reedy Cam," and describes the pleasures he is enjoying, chiefly "the pomp of the theater" where "impassioned tragedy wields high the bloody scepter," by which at times he is affected "even to bitter tears." In other words, this Puritan youth is indulging a natural inclination for the drama, like every ardent youth born under the Elizabethan influence. Like Bacon, he complained of the unfruitful character of the university training, but his own time was well spent; one of the first impressions the reader gets from his poetry is that of his vast learning; indeed no other poet of the first order ever owed so much of his inspiration to books.

Among the poems written while in college are the *Hymn on the Nativity*, *At a Solemn Music*, *On Shakespeare*, the sprightly little *Song on a May Morning*, and the sonnet *On his Having Arrived at the Age of Twenty-three*, which Brooke regards as "one of the most solemn and beautiful pieces of personal writing in English poetry." Acknowledging that his "late Spring no bud or blossom sheweth," with noble resolution he dedicates himself—

Early Poems

> To that same lot, however mean or high,
> Toward which Time leads me, and the will of Heaven;
> All is, if I have grace to use it so,
> As ever in my great Taskmaster's eye.

Milton's father had intended him for the church, but this career was made impossible by the spirit of liberty that was already moving his soul. So had tyranny "invaded the church," he says, "that he who would take orders must subscribe slave." But there was another reason. God "has instilled into me," he says, "a vehement love of the beautiful," and "I am wont day and night to seek for this idea of the beautiful, through all the forms and faces of things." Here are the controlling elements of Milton's character, love of liberty and love of beauty. His love of the beautiful is not merely an æsthetic emotion, but includes moral and spiritual beauty as well. It is the spirit of the Renaissance blending with Puritan idealism. No career except that of scholar and poet would satisfy such yearnings, and to poetry Milton's life was henceforth consecrated.

Choosing a Career

From the university he went to his father's country home at Horton, where he spent five years in study and meditation. It was an ideal place for the cloistral retirement of a poet, abounding in the beauties of rural scenery; near by flows the silver Thames and not far away rise the towers of Windsor, "bosomed high in tufted trees." Here he wrote *L'Allegro*, *Il Penseroso*, *Arcades*, *Comus*, and *Lycidas*, all reflecting the idyllic conditions of his happy life. The product of five years was not great, but had he written nothing else he would still be accounted a great poet.

Life at Horton

In 1638 he went to Italy and spent a year of delight in the most brilliant circles of learning and culture. At Florence he was invited into the Academies, or literary societies, and exchanged compliments with his friends in Italian verse. He visited Galileo in his prison, spent two months in Rome, and at Naples met the venerable Manso, biographer of Tasso, whose courtesies he acknowledged in a Latin poem. But Florence chiefly enchanted him. To a friend there he wrote: "I eagerly go for a feast to that

Italian Journey

Dante of yours, and to Petrarca," and better than Athens or Rome "I love to visit your Arno and these hills of Fiesole."

Milton returned to England on hearing of the increasing political troubles, thinking it "base to be traveling for pleasure abroad" while his countrymen were "contending for their liberties at home." He did not at once plunge into the "troubled sea of hoarse disputes," but taught private pupils and wrote a *Tractate on Education*. In 1643 he hastily married Mary, the seventeen-year-old daughter of a Cavalier, Mr. Richard Powell, who left him at the end of a month and did not return for two years. In hot indignation at laws that afforded him no relief, he wrote four pamphlets on *Divorce*, the only effect of which was to scandalize his friends and make himself ridiculous.

Unwise Marriage

The period from 1639 to 1660 is a part of Milton's life that lovers of his poetry would prefer to forget. The gracious poet of *L'Allegro* is unrecognizable in the violent pamphleteer. Twenty years were given to political and religious warfare. During this period he produced no poetry except a few personal sonnets, but he published twenty-five prose pamphlets, which were learned, powerful, and for the most part ferocious assaults upon the enemy. A kind of reverence is due to these unpleasant documents, however, for they were written with a lofty desire to serve the cause of liberty. Only one, the *Areopagitica*, survives as literature. In the *Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* he justified the execution of the King, and in *Eikonoklastes* he replied to the *Eikon Basilike*, a strong plea for popular sympathy, purporting to have been written by the King himself while in prison.

Period of Political Warfare

In recognition of these services Milton was made Latin Secretary to Cromwell's government. The last pamphlet was a *Defense of the English People*, written in Latin, in answer to the defense of the royal cause by the great Continental scholar, Salmasius. This effort cost Milton his eyesight. It is a bitter reflection, moreover, that a few years later the principles he

had advocated so devotedly were repudiated by the people whom he had defended, and his pamphlets burned by the public hangman.

In 1652, the year in which Milton became totally blind, his wife died, leaving three daughters, who were to be a sore

MILTON'S HOME AT CHALFONT, 1665–1666

In this house *Paradise Regained* was written

trial to him. Four years later he married Catherine Woodcock, whose brief life is memorialized in the sonnets. In 1663 he married Elizabeth Minshull, who seems to have cared for him tenderly through the remainder of his life. Much has been written about his domestic infelicities. He was probably not the most amiable of husbands and fathers, and the austerity of his studies and his assumption of woman's inferiority were naturally not sources of sunshine in the household. But that he could be genial is seen in the sonnet *To Mr. Lawrence;* and to the essential nobility of his character and life his poetry is a convincing witness.

Domestic Life

The Restoration brought material ruin to Milton, and gave him, as he says of the ruined Samson, the "condemnation of the ingrateful multitude"; but in truth it was a restoration of

the poet to himself. His property was confiscated, his life was in danger, and he lived in hiding, blind and alone, abandoned by his own party and despised by the party of triumph. Yet in the midst of this wreck of his fortunes and hopes, with sublime calmness and resolution, he put on again his singing robes and completed that great work of which he had long been dreaming, "something so written to aftertimes as they should not willingly let it die." As early as 1642 the subject for his great work was chosen and the plan drawn up in the form of a drama. In 1658 a beginning was made. In 1667 *Paradise Lost* was published, and in 1671 *Paradise Regained* appeared in the same volume with *Samson Agonistes*. He wrote no more poetry, but with indomitable energy he produced a *History of Britain*, a *Brief History of Muscovy*, and several learned works in Latin.

Effects of the Restoration

Milton's home was now in Artillery Walk, Bunhill Fields, and a fairly complete picture of his daily life has been preserved. He rose early, "generally at four o'clock in summer and five in winter. After having a chapter or two of the Hebrew Bible read to him, he worked, first in meditation by himself, and then after breakfast by dictation to his amanuensis, interspersed with further readings to him from the books he wanted to consult, till near his midday dinner. The afternoon was given to walking in the garden, or to playing on the organ and singing, or hearing his wife sing." And he used also "to sit in a gray coarse cloth coat at the door of his house in warm sunny weather, and so, as well as in his house, receive the visits of people of distinguished parts." Among these visitors was the young poet Dryden. But there soon came a day when this pale-faced figure with sightless eyes was seen no more at the doorway in Bunhill Fields. On November 8, 1674, Milton died, and in the church of St. Giles, Cripplegate, he was buried beside his father.

Habits of his Last Years

Milton's literary life divides naturally into three periods: the Lyric Period, ending in 1639; the Prose Period, from 1639

to 1660; and the Epic Period, from 1660 to 1674. To the first period belong the so-called "minor poems," a term that carries an unfortunate implication of inferiority; for, measured by their influence, these early poems are as great as the great epics. The beauty and melody of *L'Allegro* are absorbed into the lives of thousands who are moved only to an intellectual admiration by the solemn cadences of *Paradise Lost*. Although departing from the type form of the lyric, these poems are all composed in the lyrical spirit, and this spirit, as well as the rich coloring, is thoroughly Elizabethan. For this reason Milton is not inappropriately called "the last of the Elizabethans."

The Lyric Period

The Christmas Hymn, written when he was just twenty-one, strikes the note of "high seriousness," with grace and majesty of expression, that is sounded through all his poetry. It has the faults of exuberant youth, is overloaded with classic ornament, and betrays an acquaintance with the Donne-Cowley school. As Gosse suggests, "we read the *Nativity Ode* with rapture, but sometimes with a smile." These excrescences, however, are quickly smoothed out by the general impression of the beauty of the poem.

The Nativity Ode

The companion poems, *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, the Cheerful Man and the Meditative Man, describe, not two different persons or types, but two moods of the same person. So ingeniously are they interwoven, by parallelism and contrast, that each poem is incomplete without the other. It is a rather futile criticism, therefore, that tries to find the poet's spirit especially expressed in the pensive poem; indeed the poet was a very happy man when the poems were written, and doubtless agreed with Burton, whom he was then reading, that "a most incomparable delight it is so to melancholize and build castles in the air." These exquisite poems, in their art "graceful as the tracery of dancing figures about a Greek vase," are among

L'Allegro and Il Penseroso

the choicest gems of English poetry. Their golden phrases linger in the memory like strains of tender music or joys snatched from care.

It is a singular circumstance that Milton adopted and perfected, in the masque of *Comus*, a form of drama that was intimately associated with the extravagant magnificence of the court, so obnoxious to the Puritans. *Comus* was written for the celebration, at Ludlow Castle, of the Earl of Bridgewater's installation as Lord President of Wales. Henry Lawes, the most eminent composer of the period and a friend of Milton, wrote the music for the songs. Milton's indebtedness for the plot to Peele's *Old Wives' Tale* might seem to impair his credit for originality, but like Shakespeare he picked up the crude ore of poetry wherever he happened to find it and made it his own by refining it into pure gold. The theme is the power of purity, moral and spiritual, a power allied to divinity. The idea was fundamental to Milton's thinking, and he often reverted to it. The Lady of *Comus* is symbolic of a lofty scheme of life, the key to which is suggested in the closing lines:—

Masque of Comus

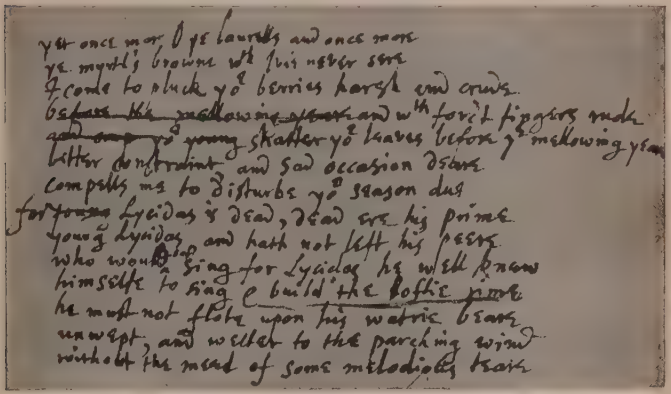
> Or if Virtue feeble were,
> Heaven itself would stoop to her.

The many passages expressing this exaltation of virtue are autobiographic revelations. The measured dignity of the poem and the purity of its style are in perfect harmony with the lofty theme. It is possible to find in the character of Comus and his "monstrous rout" an allusion to Cavalier debaucheries, but any direct satirical intention would have been highly improper under the circumstances of the presentation of the masque.

In 1637 Edward King, a friend of Milton at the university, was drowned in the Irish Sea, and a volume of memorial poems was issued at Cambridge, to which *Lycidas* was Milton's contribution. Technically, *Lycidas* is a pastoral elegy, a lyric

type that originated with the Greek idyllic poets. Milton's classical culture made it quite natural to adopt this form for his noble threnody. Within the artificial restraints of the pastoral form he presents a remarkable series of poetic scenes, and voices many sentiments besides sorrow, as varied as love of nature, personal aspiration, and political invective. The poem, as Palgrave remarks, is "a test of any

Lycidas



A REDUCED FACSIMILE OF A PORTION OF THE MANUSCRIPT OF LYCIDAS

reader's insight into the most poetical aspects of poetry." It is a touchstone of literary taste, and undoubtedly its strongest appeal is to that "fit audience though few" which Milton preferred; but it would be a poor soul indeed that was not stirred at some point by the pervading beauty of the poem.

In writing prose Milton acknowledged that he had the use, as it were, of only his "left hand." The beloved instruments of his poetic art were exchanged for the unseemly weapons of war. His prose shows little advance over that of his contemporaries; it is generally diffuse, formless, and forbidding; its ponderous sentences unroll themselves like reverberating

thunder. But the poet's instincts could not be entirely suppressed. There are passages in which his spirit was for the moment lifted by some fine emotion out of the dusty avenues of controversy into an atmosphere of ideal truth and beauty, and to such passages he would give some of the rhythmic splendor of his poetry. The *Areopagitica*, a noble plea for liberty of thought and expression, belongs to classic literature because of its finer and saner passion, and freedom from the scurrilities of personal controversy. See how he rises upon the swelling rhythms of poetry at the thought of England's greatness:—

Milton's Prose Style

> Methinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant nation, rousing herself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks; methinks I see her as an eagle mewing her mighty youth, and kindling her undazzled eyes at the full midday beam; purging and unscaling her long-abused sight at the fountain itself of heavenly radiance.

But the most comforting relief in this period of Milton's controversial prose is the *Sonnets*, written at infrequent intervals, which shed their light like benignant stars shining through the swirling mists of a stormy night. In this difficult and enticing form of composition, Milton is unexcelled. Shakespeare perfected, as we have seen, an English type of sonnet; Milton accepted, with slight modification, the Petrarchian model, and the Miltonic type has generally prevailed with modern poets—Wordsworth, Mrs. Browning and others—leading finally to the adoption of the pure Italian type, as by Rossetti. In another respect Milton's example marks an epoch in the history of the sonnet. Hitherto the theme had been almost exclusively love, and the "sugred sonettes" of the Elizabethans had degenerated into effusions of false sentiment. Milton raised the sonnet to new dignity by extending its theme, securing for it a free charter to the whole realm of human interests. Nothing had appeared in English poetry like the sonnet *On His Blindness* with that famous closing line:—

The Sonnets

They also serve who only stand and wait.

Upon the ruins of Puritanism arose its splendid monument, *Paradise Lost*, expressing its loftiest aspirations and symbolizing its struggles and defeat. This epic places Milton among the four or five greatest poets of the world. In nobility of theme, vastness of conception, and supreme excellence of artistic execution he is approached only by Dante. No other poet has so succeeded in expressing the illimitable. "There are no such vistas and avenues of verse as his," says Lowell. "In reading *Paradise Lost* one has a feeling of spaciousness such as no other poet gives." He is our greatest artist in verse, and to his art he brought the gorgeous fancy of romanticism, the glowing colors of the Renaissance, the stately beauties of Greek and Roman literature, and the chaste splendors of Biblical phrase; all these were united to produce "the noblest example which our literature affords of the ordered majesty of classic form." And yet it must be admitted that the surpassing greatness of *Paradise Lost* rests upon the authority of the few rather than upon the experience of the many. The magnificence of its learning, the extreme reaches of imagination, the grand sweep of its majestic rhythms, the vague and bloodless characters detach the poem from ordinary experience. "An appreciation of Milton," says Pattison, "is the last reward of consummated scholarship."

Paradise Lost

The theme of *Paradise Lost* is "man's first disobedience." In accordance with the rules of the epic, the poem opens in the midst of the action; the real beginning of the story is in Book V. Lucifer, most glorious of the angels, becoming jealous of the Son who shares God's throne, rebels, with a third part of the hosts of Heaven. A terrible battle is fought, lasting three days. At length the Son goes forth to battle, and Lucifer and his hosts are cast down from the walls of Heaven into Hell, "there to dwell in adamantine chains and penal fire." The Almighty determines to create a new race of beings, to take

the place of the fallen angels in his affection, and sends Christ forth into chaos to mark out the boundaries of a new world.

Outline of the Poem

In six days the Earth with all that it contains is created, and in a beautiful garden watched over by heavenly guardians Adam and Eve are placed, to live forever in perfect happiness. Meanwhile Lucifer and his chiefs are brooding over their fallen estate and plotting revenge. At a great meeting in Pandemonium he proposes to go in search of this new world and work some mischief upon it. He makes the journey through chaos, spies upon Adam and Eve, learns about the Tree of Knowledge, transforms himself into a glittering serpent and tempts Eve to eat of the forbidden fruit. Adam also eats, and all nature shudders at the coming of sin and death into the world. The archangel Michael reveals to Adam in a vision the future history of the world and Christ's suffering to redeem mankind from the consequences of this first disobedience. Then Adam and Eve are driven out of Paradise by "the brandished sword of God."

A mere outline shows the vastness of Milton's design. It is the story not only of mankind, but of the universe, constructed according to Calvinistic theology. The word that best describes *Paradise Lost* is sublimity. Its style is the grandest in English poetry. It is like a solemn temple of worship, vast and impressive in its proportions and decorated in its minor spaces with infinitely varied details of beauty. If the whole poem is too difficult for appreciation, there are special beauties to enjoy, strewn upon its pages—

Sublimity of Paradise Lost

> Thick as autumnal leaves that strew the brooks
> In Valombrosa.

Such especially are the passages in which Milton pauses to speak of himself, as in the opening of Books III and VII, or to glance at his enemies, "the sons of Belial" at court, "flown

BLIND MILTON DICTATING PARADISE LOST TO HIS DAUGHTERS

From the Painting by M. Munkacsy

with insolence and wine." Milton was without dramatic power, as he was without humor, and his intense personality is always prominent; it is the finest egoism in all literature.

Critics have suggested that Satan is the real hero of the poem, owing to Milton's unconscious sympathy with the rebel angel's defiance of authority and passion for liberty. He was himself an arch rebel, and he inspires the speeches of Satan with much of the fiery and indomitable spirit of Puritanism. The "lost archangel" enters the infernal world as—

Hero of the Epic

> one who brings
> A mind not to be changed by place or time.
> The mind is its own place, and in itself
> Can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven.

But the whole plot and purpose of the poem center in Adam and Eve. The figure of Lucifer loses its dignity and splendor as the poem proceeds; the "son of the Morning" is transformed by his own lust for evil into Satan, and finally assumes the form of a loathsome creature that sits "squat like a toad," spreading its slimy poison over humanity.

In adopting blank verse for his great epic, Milton chose the severest and stateliest of English measures, and by transcendent skill made of it an essentially new instrument. His verse moves in sublime harmonies, varied by minor effects of phrase and cadence; especially by a frequent change of pause, by which the lines are broken at varying points, he avoided the monotony to which blank verse is always liable. A special peculiarity is the gathering of the thought into a kind of verse-paragraph or period, in which the sense is suspended through several qualifying clauses, producing a sonorous dignity and amplitude of both thought and rhythm that constitute what Matthew Arnold calls the "grand style." Milton's blank verse is a species by itself, the admiration and the despair of all subsequent poets. Something of its peculiar enchantment may be felt in this description of evening:—

Milton's Blank Verse

Now came still Evening on, and Twilight gray
Had in her sober livery all things clad;
Silence accompanied; for beast and bird,
They to their grassy couch, these to their nests
Were slunk, all but the wakeful nightingale.
She all night long her amorous descant sung:
Silence was pleased. Now glowed the firmament
With living sapphires; Hesperus, that led
The starry host, rode brightest, till the Moon,
Rising in clouded majesty, at length
Apparent queen, unveiled her peerless light,
And o'er the dark her silver mantle threw.

As *Paradise Lost* is the story of Satan's triumph over mankind, its sequel, *Paradise Regained*, is the story of Christ's triumph over Satan. Its four books describe, with much learned and tedious speechmaking, Christ's temptation in the wilderness. Although repeating many of the great qualities of *Paradise Lost*, the poem is generally regarded as inferior in interest and in poetic merit.

Nearer to the majestic heights of the great epic is *Samson Agonistes*, a theme singularly appropriate for the final poetic expression of Milton's personality. It is a choral drama of the Greek type, in which the melancholy gravity of the ancient tragic poets is reproduced with marvelous perfection. The style is severe almost to harshness, stripped of ornament and color, hard and clear like cut crystal. But more interesting is its autobiographic significance. The story of Samson is an allegory of Milton's last years. Like Samson he had fought the Philistines, and had "fallen upon evil days," old, blind, and dishonored, the sport and scorn of an impious crowd. As Samson triumphed over his enemies, in victorious death, so he hopes for the final victory of the Puritan cause, for which he has so bitterly suffered. In tragic gloom Milton ended his life, but with gaze steadfastly fixed upon the celestial mountain peaks of hope and triumph.

Samson Agonistes

PROGRAM OF WORK

CLASS READING AND STUDY. *Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity; L'Allegro; Il Penseroso; At a Solemn Music; Comus; Lycidas.*

SONNETS: *To the Nightingale; On his Having Arrived at the Age of Twenty-Three; To the Lord General Cromwell; On the Late Massacre in Piedmont; To Mr. Lawes on his Airs; On his Blindness.*

PARADISE LOST: Bk. I, entire; bk. III, 1–55; bk. IV, 598–656.

PROSE: *Areopagitica* (Arber's Reprints, Manly, Century, Pancoast, Garnett, R. L. S.); *Of Education* (Garnett, Pancoast).

TEXTS: *Minor Poems* Merrill's English Texts; Rolfe's English Classics; Scribner Classics; Lake Classics; English Readings. *Paradise Lost*, bk. I—Clarendon Press, Cambridge Press, R. L. S., Pocket Classics.

BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM. Pattison's *Milton* (E. M. L.); Garnett's *Milton* (G. W.); Raleigh's *Milton;* Trent's *Milton;* Masson's *Life of Milton;* Masson's Globe Edition of *Milton;* Moody's Cambridge Edition; Browne's Clarendon Press Edition; Masterman's *Age of Milton;* Cambridge, vol. VII, ch. V; Courthope, vol. III, chs. XIII, XIV; Macaulay's *Essay on Milton;* Arnold's *Essays in Criticism*, Second Series, and *Mixed Essays;* Lowell's *Among My Books*, Second Series, and *Latest Literary Essays;* Birrell's *Obiter Dicta*, Second Series; Thompson's *Essays on Milton;* Woodberry's *Great Writers;* Dowden's *Transcripts and Studies* (Idealism of Milton); Bailey's *Milton* (Home Univ. Library); Mackail's *Springs of Helicon;* Johnson's *Lives of the Poets;* Landor's *Imaginary Conversations* (Southey and Landor); Pattison's *Sonnets of Milton;* Evans's *English Masques* (Warwick Library); Chambers's *English Pastorals* (Warwick Library); Addison's Criticisms on *Paradise Lost* in the *Spectator* (Saturday papers from Jan. 5 to May 3, 1712).

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION AND RESEARCH

1. A picture of Milton's home life during childhood. 2. Give an account of Milton's relations with Diodati. 3. Compare Milton's Puritanism with Bunyan's Puritanism. 4. A description of Milton's Italian journey. 5. The effect of Milton's early education in music on his poetry. 6. Characterize briefly each of the three periods of Milton's life. 7. An apology for the conduct of Milton's daughters (Pattison, pp. 142–145).

8. Trace the pastoral element in all of the minor poems. 9. Make a list of parallel passages, showing the complementary character of *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*. 10. Explain the allegorical character of

Comus. 11. How does *Comus* differ from the ordinary masque (consult Evans, or Ward's *English Drama*, or Symonds's *Shakespeare's Predecessors*, ch. ix)? 12. Does the pastoral form add to the beauty and interest of *Lycidas*?

13. Explain the phrase, "last of the Elizabethans," as applied to Milton. 14. Compare his blank verse with Shakespeare's and Tennyson's. 15. Justify Wordsworth's line: "Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea"; and Tennyson's epithet: "God-gifted organ-voice of England." 16. Contrast between the Milton of the poems and the Milton of the prose pamphlets. 17. Evidences of Milton's love of the drama. 18. Milton's ideal of womanhood as embodied in his Eve (*Paradise Lost;* bk. iv, 634; bk. viii, 521–578; bk. ix, 227–234). 19. Compare Milton's form of the sonnet with Shakespeare's, Wordsworth's, and Rossetti's. 20. Discuss the application to his own life of Milton's famous saying: "He who would not be frustrate of his hope to write well in laudable things ought himself to be a true poem."

CHAPTER XII

THE RESTORATION

1660–1700

The return of the Stuarts to the throne opened a period of excessive reaction. The people, already in revolt against the unnatural restraints imposed by Puritanism, welcomed the King as a deliverer from hateful bondage, and celebrated the restoration of their freedom by plunging into the wildest dissipations. The easy-going Charles made pleasure his most serious occupation, and under his leadership society adopted the manners and morals acquired during the exile in France. Noble lords became French fops, scented their clothes with pulvilio and jasmine, and decorated their speech with French phrases. Ordinary standards of conduct were changed; virtue and sobriety were synonyms for Puritanism and hypocrisy; lofty sentiments, such as love and reverence, were sneered at as hollow mockeries.

Excesses of Reaction

The shams and corruption of this society are faithfully mirrored in the inimitable *Diary* of Samuel Pepys, Secretary to the Admiralty under Charles II. This delightful gossip wrote down each day in cipher what he had seen and heard in court circles, with a naïve and confidential particularity that is "mighty divertising," as he would say, and historically very valuable. In the secrecy of his diary he expresses a furtive sympathy with the Puritans, on seeing several led to prison for attending conventicles, wishing that "they would either conform, or be more wise and not be

Pepys's Diary

catched." And four years later he wrote, more prophetically than he knew: "The business of abusing the Puritans begins to grow stale and of no use, they being the people that at last will be found the wisest."

This "business of abusing the Puritans" was carried on by Samuel Butler with uproarious laughter in his *Hudibras*, a mock heroic poem, in which a Presbyterian justice and his Independent squire, like Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, go forth to suppress May games and bear-baitings. Though the hero was modeled after Sir Samuel Luke, a Presbyterian colonel, in whose family Butler had lived, the purpose was to ridicule Puritans in general. The humorous adventures are coarse and boisterous, but there is much keen wit and shrewd characterization, and the reader's mind is kept on the jump by the most surprising verbal tricks and clever audacities of rhyme and rhythm. The poem was immensely popular; the King carried a copy in his pocket for ready reference. It has contributed the adjective "Hudibrastic" to the vocabulary of criticism and scores of its short, snappy couplets to the common stock of quotations. A few couplets will illustrate Butler's method of putting Puritanism in the pillory:—

Butler's Hudibras, 1663

> Such as do build their faith upon
> The holy text of pike and gun;
> Decide all controversies by
> Infallible artillery;
> And prove their doctrine orthodox
> With apostolic blows and knocks;
> Call fire and sword and desolation
> A godly, thorough Reformation,
> Which always must be going on,
> And still be doing, never done,
> As if Religion were intended
> For nothing else but to be mended.

Politically the reaction was toward peace. The drums and tramplings of war that had so shaken the nation no longer

stirred men's hearts. Politics, falling away from large national issues, became factional and personal. Modern party politics began; the names "Whig" and "Tory" first appeared in the reign of Charles II. Warfare was transferred to the field of letters; the sword was exchanged for the pen, and combats of wit were the order of the day. An age of satire opened, in which the greatest masterpieces of this kind in our literature were produced. In the general breakdown of ideals and principles, faith gave way to skepticism and doubt, inspiration to cold logic, imagination to understanding, idealism to materialism. Under the influence of the Royal Society, founded in 1662, men of all classes engaged with enthusiasm in experimental science. Bacon now came to his own. The King had a laboratory in Whitehall, and the elegant Buckingham turned from intrigues of diplomacy to experiments in chemistry. Poets sang in lofty phrases the approach of a golden age of knowledge.

Political and Social Changes

For the madness of both politics and society a kind of sanction was found in the materialistic theories of the *Leviathan* of Thomas Hobbes, who had been a tutor of the King. According to this philosopher, self-interest is the mainspring of all human action, a doctrine easily turned to the support of all sorts of selfish indulgence. "Through disgust of Puritanism," says Taine, "Hobbes reduced human nature to its merely animal aspects." Intellectualism reached its philosophic culmination in 1690 in John Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, in which he argues against the theory of "innate ideas," that is, inborn or inspired wisdom, claiming that all knowledge is derived from experience. In this and other works of Locke the age realized its ideal of exact thinking and enlightened common sense.

Thomas Hobbes, 1588–1679. John Locke, 1632–1704

In matters purely literary the year 1660 marks a more complete division than is usually found between literary epochs. There was a violent break with traditions of the past. Relics

of the Renaissance disappeared, and a new intellectual civilization began. Waller, Cowley, Davenant, and other authors had lived in France during the exile of the court, and there they had found a movement in progress to correct the loose manner of romanticism by a more faithful following of "the ancients." It was a new criticism, the aims of which were uniform excellence, consistency of form, close reasoning, and clear expression. The poets had found also an Academy for promoting and sustaining literary standards. They returned to England enthusiastic for the propagation of these ideas, and English literature was made over on the French plan.

New Literary Ideals

The Royal Society, modeled after the French Academy, included in its purposes the reform of literary expression. Classicism had come to England in the Elizabethan period through Italy, and had inspired but not materially changed the native genius; classicism now came to England through France and became a dominant influence that almost obliterated the native genius. Boileau's *Art Poétique*, founded upon Horace's *Ars Poetica*, was the one lawbook of literature in both France and England. The natural style of the Elizabethans that was a law unto itself gave place to an artificial style that was regulated by the ancient law. Criticism took the place of creation, thinking of feeling, art of inspiration.

French Classicism

The couplet-makers were now exalted, and the smoothly rounded, nicely balanced, and precisely rhymed couplet became an epitomized expression of the new literary ideals. Whether Waller and his followers might have developed the couplet independently of French precedent is still a matter of controversy, but certainly its universal adoption and final perfection were results of the French influence. Every poet and fashionable rhymster cultivated it diligently, and many wrote treatises in rhyme to commend the new criticism, like the Earl of Roscommon's

The Classic Couplet

Essay on Translated Verse and the Earl of Mulgrave's *Essay upon Poetry*. A passion for "the new way of writing," as it was called, in both prose and verse, now seized all authors, but the highest achievements in the use of the couplet and in all other literary departures were reached by John Dryden, the one great figure in Restoration literature.

John Dryden

1631–1700

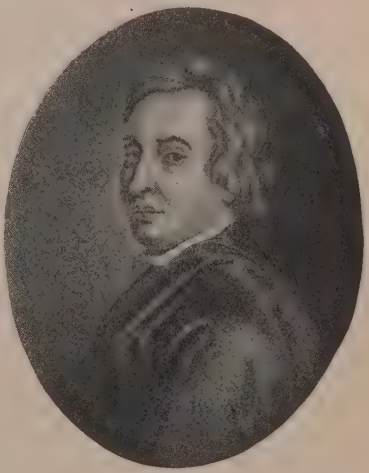
Dryden was born in Aldwinkle, Northamptonshire, in 1631, of Puritan parents. He was educated at Westminster School, under the famous Dr. Busby, and at Trinity College, Cambridge. He obtained the B.A. degree in 1654 and probably remained at the university three years longer. The M.A. degree was conferred on him in 1668, at the King's request, by the Archbishop of Canterbury. Little is known of his career, except as it is revealed in his writings, and by a few unauthenticated anecdotes and a few facts sifted from the malevolent information given by his adversaries. In 1662 he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society, and the next year was married to Lady Elizabeth Howard, with whose brother, Sir Robert Howard, he was in friendly literary relationship. In 1670 he was made Poet Laureate and Historiographer with "a salary of two hundred pounds a year and a butt of canary." He was now intimate with the great people of the court, enjoyed social distinction and comfortable wealth, and in a crowd of aspiring poets was recognized as the undisputed leader.

A Career of Great Honors and Success

Only two poems survive from Dryden's undergraduate days, and these disclose little promise of a poet. The awakening of his genius was slow. In his twenty-eighth year his career of authorship began with the *Heroic Stanzas* on Cromwell's death. The Protector is praised with

Early Poems

a judicious moderation that somewhat prepared Dryden's readers for a shift to the royal side, two years later, with his *Astræa Redux*, a pæan of jubilation on the return of Charles II. This was followed by a "Panegyric" on the coronation and a poetic compliment *To My Lord Chancellor*. In 1667 appeared the most important of the early poems, *Annus Mirabilis*, describing the Dutch war and the great London fire of 1666. These early poems constitute Dryden's period of panegyrics, for in all the note of extravagant adulation of great people prevails, a note he learned to sound with much profit to himself. The style shows him to be still under subjection to the Donne–Cowley school, from which henceforth he became free. The next fourteen years after the *Annus Mirabilis* were devoted to the drama.



JOHN DRYDEN

Upon the removal of Puritan restrictions, the people returned with eager appetites to the flesh-pots of their beloved theater. Even four years before the fall of the Commonwealth the ingenious Davenant had outwitted the government with his musical and dramatic "entertainment," *The Siege of Rhodes*, generally regarded as the first English opera, and as marking also the first use of movable painted scenes and the first appearance of women on the stage in England. While the King was on his way to London, a company of players was organized, and one of the first items of business to which he gave his royal attention was the issuing

Reopening of the Theaters

of patents for two new theaters. The revelry of the stage was fully restored, and more, for actors and actresses were lifted to the social plane of earls and duchesses and mingled with them in Whitehall. Everybody wrote plays, the King often assisting poets and managers with personal advice. Within a period of six years one hundred and sixty plays were produced.

At first the old plays were revived, but were soon discarded for plays of the French type. John Evelyn writes in his *Diary:* "I saw *Hamlet* played, but now the old plays begin to disgust this refined age, since his Majesty's being so long abroad"; and Pepys saw *Midsummer Night's Dream* and thought it a "most insipid ridiculous play." Corneille and Molière became the models of the English stage. Shakespeare's plays were regarded as crude, "Gothic," the work of an inspired but unenlightened poet, and were used only in an "adapted" form (that is, mangled often beyond recognition), and as a rich field for common plunder. The disregard of Aristotle's "unities," the mingling of tragedy and comedy, and the clown were things repugnant to the fastidious French taste. In respect to artistic form, the drama was "refined" in accordance with the rules of the new criticism.

Change in Dramatic Standards

Dryden was the acknowledged leader of the new stage, and with vast energy labored to propagate the new ideas. He wrote comedies that were gross and vulgar beyond excuse, as he frankly acknowledged later in life. In tragedy he cultivated to its most gorgeous bloom the remarkable species known as the "heroic play," which took its form from Corneille and its material from the fantastic French romances of Gomberville, Calprenède, and Mlle. de Scudéry, that were now, in English translations, the chief reading of fashionable society. Probably nothing in all literature is quite so preposterous, from a modern point of view, as these celebrated romances of vapid sentiment and impossible adventures of heroes always superlatively noble and heroines always di-

Heroic Plays

vinely perfect. They were some eight or nine thousand pages in length, and a "lady of quality," like Addison's Leonora, was expected to master the details of these stories and memorize the fine passages for daily use. Out of these elaborate inanities and similar material Dryden produced the transient glories of the Heroic Drama.

The typical and highest achievements of this sort are *The Indian Emperor* and *The Conquest of Granada.* The verse is the rhymed couplet of French tragedy, which is totally alien to English dramatic genius; the language is pompous and extravagant, and the action is strained to varied heights of absurdity. The leading hero of the play appeared on the stage with huge ostrich plumes rising high above his head, walked with a stately strut, and declaimed his speeches with a musical cadence. But Dryden was a poet, and there are purple patches in these plays everywhere, beauties of thought and rhythm, almost jostled out of sight by the absurdities.

Influenced by an increasing admiration for Shakespeare and a maturer critical judgment, Dryden finally abandoned his "long-loved mistress, rhyme," and wrote in blank verse his finest play, *All for Love.* With splendid audacity he challenged direct comparison with Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* by employing the same theme. It is not Shakespeare, but enough like Shakespeare to command a high respect for Dryden's dramatic power. With the success of this play the mania for rhymed tragedies rapidly subsided. Dryden had been writing plays for nearly twenty years, but he was never proud of this work, and now deserted the stage, "to which my genius never much inclined me," he says. At fifty years of age he was just prepared for his best work in poetry.

All for Love, 1678

With characteristic vigor and zest he plunged into the political struggles and in 1681 produced the first of the great satires by which he is generally known and judged as a poet. In *Absalom and Achitophel* the rebellion of Absalom against his

father David is used as a parallel to the effort of the Whigs to secure the royal succession of the Duke of Monmouth in place of the Catholic James. The poem is a series of brilliant satirical portraits, the finest of which are Achitophel, representing the Earl of Shaftsbury, leader of the Whigs, and Zimri, representing the Duke of Buckingham, who had ridiculed Dryden and his "heroic plays" in a burlesque play called *The Rehearsal.* Shaftsbury was acquitted in a trial for treason, and a medal was struck in his honor. This brought forth from Dryden a second attack in *The Medal.* A Whig poet, Shadwell, ventured to answer this, with a deal of scurrilous abuse of Dryden, and for his rashness was immortalized in *MacFlecknoe.* Flecknoe, an obscure poetaster who had been the butt of the critics, is represented as looking for a successor to his throne of dullness and selects Shadwell:—

Dryden's Satires

> Shadwell alone of all my sons is he
> Who stands confirmed in full stupidity.
> The rest to some faint meaning make pretense,
> But Shadwell never deviates into sense.
> Some beams of wit on other souls may fall,
> Strike through and make a lucid interval;
> But Shadwell's genuine night admits no ray,
> His rising fogs prevail upon the day.

In these poems Dryden demonstrated the peculiar fitness of the couplet for satire. The verse moves in a succession of telling strokes, with "a sting in the tail of each couplet." In this field of his highest achievement he is supreme. No other satirist has equaled his power of caustic characterization, incisive wit, scorching irony, and keen analysis of a victim with an air of impartial justice. *Absalom and Achitophel* is the greatest English political satire, and has served as a model for political and social satire for two centuries. *MacFlecknoe* is a masterpiece of personal satire, in which the weaknesses of a fellow poet are paraded with a vicious solemnity.

Power of the Satires

Dryden next turned to religious controversy and in 1682 wrote the *Religio Laici* in defense of the Christian religion, especially as embodied in the Church of England. Changing his own religious faith, suspiciously near the time of James's accession, he next wrote his longest didactic poem, *The Hind and the Panther*, in defense of Catholicism. It was inevitable that he should be charged with time-serving hypocrisy in this change, but not a single fact in connection with the matter, when properly interpreted, shows Dryden to have been insincere. The poem is an allegory, the milk-white Hind representing the Church of Rome and the Panther the Church of England, and the animals engage in long and subtle theological discussions that are artistically absurd and entirely unreadable to-day. But even in these poems, as in the satires, one is stimulated by the vigor of Dryden's spirit, and is forced to admire, as Pope admired—

Religious Poems

> The varying verse, the full-resounding line,
> The long majestic march, and energy divine.

The few lyrical poems of Dryden seem like inspired exceptions in the spacious tracts of his rhymed arguments and stories. *Alexander's Feast* is "a masterpiece of rapture and of art," declares Taine. The first *Ode for St. Cecilia's Day* is hardly less brilliant, and the *Elegy on Mrs. Anne Killigrew* Dr. Johnson thought to be "the noblest ode that our language ever has produced." These poems and a few songs in the dramas are proof of a fertile lyric gift that was allowed to go to waste.

The Lyric Poems

The revolution of 1688 brought calamity to Dryden, but he met it with sturdy manliness. As a Romanist he lost all court honors and emoluments; and also had to endure the sting of seeing the laureateship go to his enemy Shadwell. But his fame as a poet remained. He was the accepted literary dictator and reigned over the wits at Will's Coffee House, as Jonson had reigned at the Mermaid.

Under the spur of poverty Dryden produced in the next twelve years some of his most celebrated work. An age of classical affectation naturally demanded translations of the classics. Into this popular channel he now turned his talents, publishing translations of portions of Persius, Juvenal, Ovid, Horace, Theocritus, Lucretius, and Homer. A complete version of Virgil brought him large profit and larger fame. He should have completed Homer, as he intended, instead of Virgil, for he was right in saying: "The Grecian is more according to my genius than the Latin poet." This work is interpretation rather than translation, framed in the splendid diction and fluent rhymes for which the public now had a strong affection. Dryden believed it the duty of a translator "to make his author as charming as possibly he can," and for the charms of the ancients he often substituted charms of his own. This principle he applied liberally to Chaucer and Boccaccio in his volume of *Fables*. Translations of Chaucer now seem a prodigious impertinence, but they seemed quite proper to the conceit of an age that sought to rewrite all literature—even *Paradise Lost* —into rhymed couplets.

Translations of the Classics

Dryden somewhere remarks that his countrymen have "the genius rather to improve an invention than to invent themselves." This description fits his own genius. He seemed content with the greatness of a translator and improver, and so became one of the most skilled craftsmen in English letters. He did not invent the heroic couplet, but he perfected it, leaving nothing for Pope but to polish it a little for society verse and sharpen its teeth a little for satire. His mind was more critical than creative, keen in perception and analysis, and remarkably versatile; but he lacked imagination, vision, spiritual uplift. And he lacked delicacy of appreciation, both moral and artistic. Poetry with him was not so much an instinct as a cultivated habit. Often the most interesting parts of his poems are the

Qualities of Dryden's Genius

prose prefaces; indeed he was frequently in doubt, he says, as to his "trooping thoughts, whether to run them into verse or to give them the other harmony of prose." He was, as Lowell suggests, "a prose writer with a kind of Æolian attachment."

The limitations of his art are the limitations of his character. In the light of Milton's lofty and steadfast idealism, Dryden's life looks mean and ignoble. His principles and convictions were vacillating, if not consciously subservient to low aims. A sense of unworthiness attaches to all his achievements, as if he were never rising to his best self. He professed to believe that successful poets must "conform their genius to their age," and his own conformity was complete and servile. This was his calamity, the failure of "a sovereign intellect but a subject will." And his fame pays the penalty of his weakness; his greatness is that of a poet of the second rank. Yet beneath all the fashionable fripperies which he donned for the literary masquerade of his period, there was a hearty manliness, a magnificent intellectual strength, and an enthusiasm for literary art that must always command a large respect for "glorious old John."

Dryden's Character

Dryden was regarded as the chief reformer in a self-styled "reforming age," and Professor Saintsbury still regards him as "an author whose main distinction is to have reformed the whole formal part of English prose and English poetry." His reform of the drama was a total failure; the yoking of English verse into the couplet for a hundred years was a benefit that is fairly questioned; but his important service to English prose is indisputable. Dryden was the founder of modern prose style. There had been no accepted standards of prose. The excellencies of great writers were individual or incidental. Generally prose had wandered heedlessly with a lumbering gait, guided by whim or chance, obedient to no law except that of the alien Latin.

Dryden's Service to English Prose

Dryden made the short, crisp sentence the unit of prose structure, as he made the couplet the unit of verse structure, and gave to connected discourse lucidity, directness, and colloquial ease. In this reform he was aided by the French influence in favor of simplicity and precision. The new Royal Society exacted from its members "a close, naked, natural way of speaking, positive expressions, clear senses, a native easeness," says Sprat, its first historian, and resolved "to reject all the amplifications, digressions, and swellings of style" found in current English prose.

The New Prose Style

Dryden's efforts to bring prose to this "native easeness" were furthered by others. He acknowledged indebtedness to Tillotson, whose printed sermons were ranked with the best literature. Cowley and Sir William Temple, influenced by a study of the French essayist, Montaigne, caught some of the new felicities in their *Essays*. Indeed Temple is more admirable for his well-organized sentences than for the pretentious learning his essays contain.

Lord Clarendon's *History of the Rebellion* presents transition features of prose style. Although his sentence sometimes runs to four hundred words in length, the carefully wrought "characters" of great men are excellent examples of clear and well-ordered prose. The erudite John Evelyn, whose *Diary* competes in interest and value with that of Pepys, was one of the first to adopt the French model of the short sentence, and contributed to the growth of sane prose in his *Sylva*, the first English treatise on forestry.

But the new way of writing led mainly from Dryden's *Essay of Dramatic Poesy*, in which we find the beginnings of modern criticism as well as of modern prose. A better piece of writing, however, is the preface to *The Fables*, where all the essential elements of good prose appear. Dr. Johnson perceived the merits of this style which he was not wise enough to imitate: "Every word seems to

Dryden's Essays

drop by chance, though it falls into its right place. Nothing is cold or languid; the whole is airy, animated, and vigorous; what is little is gay; what is great is splendid." Nine years after this preface to *The Fables* was written, Steele wrote the first number of the *Tatler*, which belongs to the prose of to-day.

THE POETS' CORNER IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY

A brief passage will illustrate the advancement made by Dryden in both style and criticism:—

It remains that I say somewhat of Chaucer in particular. In the first place, as he is the father of English poetry, so I hold him in the same degree of veneration as the Grecians held Homer, or the Romans Virgil: he is a perpetual fountain of good sense; learned in all sciences; and therefore speaks properly on all subjects; as he knew what to say, so he knows also when to leave off, a continence which is practiced by few writers. . . . The verse of Chaucer, I confess, is not harmonious to

us; there is the rude sweetness of a Scotch tune in it, which is natural and pleasing, though not perfect. 'Tis true, I cannot go so far as he who published the last edition of him; for he would make us believe the fault is in our ears, and that there were really ten syllables in a verse where we find but nine; but this opinion is not worth confuting, 'tis so gross and obvious an error.

Dryden died in 1700 and with a splendid public funeral was laid near Chaucer in the Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey. In the progress of letters Dryden's position was unique; he stood at the gateway of modern literature, looking backward as well as forward. Though himself a complete embodiment of his own unworthy period, he did much to bridge the chasm of the Revolution and to lead literary taste away from false classicism, back to the romanticism of the past, especially to his "divine Shakespeare." And he marked out the chief literary highways to be traveled throughout the Augustan age.

Poetasters of the Period

The minor poets and especially the court wits were busily employed in parading their knowledge of the new rules of art, in all the forms used by Dryden, but their work is of comparatively slight value. They talked wisely about Aristotle and wrote dull imitations of Horace and Boileau, and, as Dryden said of Little, if their poems "rhymed and rattled, all was well." They flattered each other in fulsome dedications or abused each other in libelous satires. The old lyric was continued by the poetical noblemen, Sedley, Dorset, and Rochester. "With Rochester," says Gosse, "the power of writing songs died in England until the age of Blake and Burns. He was the last of the Cavalier lyrists." A few pleasing lyrics of his may still be read, but it is enough for his memory, perhaps, to have written the "epitaph" on Charles II:—

Here lies our Sovereign Lord the King,
Whose word no man relies on,
Who never said a foolish thing,
Nor ever did a wise one.

The theater was a social institution where "the quality" delighted to see its life portrayed with the boldest realism. Society was in form "polite," but in feeling brutal, and the morality of the drama now fell to its lowest ebb. Tragedy expired in a vain endeavor to be classical. In Thomas Otway's *The Orphan* and *Venice Preserved*, and in Nicholas Rowe's *Fair Penitent*, the old romantic fire of natural passion flamed up briefly. But there was nothing substantial in the life of society or nation for tragedy to live upon,—no earnestness, aspiration, or faith,—and so it perished.

Decline of the Drama

On the other hand comedy flourished vigorously on the elaborate shams of social life. Artificial comedy, or the comedy of manners, reached its highest development in the school of Congreve; but the fidelity with which the leaders of this school painted the morals as well as the manners of the time makes their comedies intolerable to modern taste. "This part of our literature," says Macaulay, "is a disgrace to our language and our national character."

The School of Congreve

The comedy of manners in its best estate, as perfected by Goldsmith and Sheridan, began with Sir George Etherege's *The Man of Mode*. The Sir Fopling Flutter of this play is the parent of a long line of celebrated stage fops, descending to Lord Dundreary and Beau Brummel. Having discovered while living in Paris a new theory of comedy in Molière, Etherege dropped the buffoonery and hurly-burly intrigue of the old Spanish type and aimed at a realistic picturing of familiar characters of the day, touched up with satire, and at elegant and witty dialogue. This method was fully developed by William Congreve, William Wycherley, John Vanbrugh, George Farquhar, and Colley Cibber.

Congreve's dramatic style is brilliant in a way that is excessive and unique. His prose dialogue is refined to a uniform surface of elegance that is like the luster of rich silk. It sparkles

and scintillates with polished phrases, pointed epigrams, and witty repartee. Mr. Gosse asserts that *The Way of the World* "is the best written, the most dazzling, the most intellectually accomplished of all English comedies, perhaps of all the comedies of the world." But it is overburdened with this richness; the movement is impeded by the load of jewels it is made to carry, and for this reason the play was a failure on the stage.

Congreve's Art

But there is no soul of beautiful thought beneath the glittering surface of these comedies, no charm of human character. Nothing is natural, not even the vice. It is all a palace of pleasure, filled with an atmosphere of immorality.

A reaction in favor of decency began with the appearance, in 1698, of Jeremy Collier's *Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage*, by which the deadened conscience of society was startled into new life. Among the first to attempt definite reforms was Richard Steele, whose sentimental and moralized comedies were the foundation of the "Sentimental School," which was sustained for a time by fashionable society. In competition with comedy, other forms of entertainment appeared, the opera and the novel. Comedy declined as an original creative form of art, and after a sudden and brief blaze of glory in the plays of Goldsmith and Sheridan its light was extinguished.

Sentimental School of Drama

PROGRAM OF WORK

CLASS READING AND STUDY. Dryden: *Alexander's Feast; Song for St. Cecilia's Day; Lines Printed under the Portrait of Milton; MacFlecknoe; Absalom and Achitophel*, 150–227; *Religio Laici*, 276–333; *Hind and Panther*, 1–61; Essays: *Essay of Dramatic Poesy* (Cl. P., English Readings, Garnett, Manly, Pancoast); Preface to the *Fables* (Globe Edition, Garnett).

Butler: *Hudibras*, selections in Manly or Ward.

Pepys: *The Diary*, ad libitum, or selections in Manly.

Sedley: *To Celia; Song: Phillis is my only joy; Song: Ah! Chloris.*

Rochester: *Love and Life; Song: My dear Mistress has a heart; Constancy; Song: When on those lovely locks I gaze; To his Mistress.*

BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM. Saintsbury's *Dryden* (E. M. L.); Hinchman and Gummere; Christie's Globe Edition; Garnett's *Age of Dryden;* Gosse's *Eighteenth Century;* Lowell's *Essay on Dryden;* Macaulay's *Essay on Dryden;* Johnson's *Lives of the Poets;* Noyes's *Selected Dramas of Dryden;* Strunk's *Dryden's Essays on the Drama* (English Readings); Courthope, vol. III, ch. xv (Poets of the Court), ch. xvi (Dryden), vol. IV, ch. xvi (Dryden and the Drama); Cambridge, vol. VIII, ch. i (Dryden), ch. ii (Butler), chs. v, vi, vii (Restoration Drama), ch. viii (Court Poets), ch. xvi (The Essay); Stevenson's *Familiar Studies of Men and Books* (Pepys); Hazlitt's *English Comic Writers* (Drama); Gosse's *Congreve* (G. W.); Lamb's *Essays* (Artificial Comedy); Macaulay's *Essay on the Comic Dramatists of the Restoration.*

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND. Sidney's *Social Life in England from the Restoration to the Revolution;* Green, ch. IX, secs. 1, 2, 3; Cheyney, ch. XVI; Trevelyan's *England under the Stuarts*, ch. XI; Taine, bk. III, ch. i, pt. I, secs. 1–3 (The Roisterers), pt. II, secs. 1, 2 (The Worldlings).

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION AND RESEARCH

1. The reaction against Puritanism and its effect on literature. 2. Obtain from Pepys's *Diary* the contemporary opinion of Shakespeare's plays (consult Index). 3. Explain and illustrate the peculiar features of Butler's verse. 4. Make a selection of witty and wise epigrams from *Hudibras.* 5. Character and influence of Hobbes's philosophy (Taine, bk. III, ch. i, sec. 5). 6. Define clearly the literary principles introduced from France.

7. Outline of the life of Dryden. 8. Breadth and variety of his literary achievement. 9. Comparison between Dryden's character and Milton's character. 10. In what form of poetry does Dryden show his finest ability as a poet? 11. Justify Hale's comment on Dryden's poetic style: "There is always a singular *fitness* in his language; he uses always the right word." 12. Study the preface to the *Fables* with reference (1) to sound critical judgment and (2) to naturalness of expression. 13. Discuss Lowell's phrase for Dryden: "The first of the moderns." 14. Does Dryden's *Palamon and Arcite* contain merits that justify the "translating" of Chaucer? 15. Read and report on *The Indian Emperor.* 16. Compare Dryden's *Tempest* with Shakespeare's, as an example of the "improving" of Shakespeare. 17. Present Dryden's argument for rhyme in tragedy (*Essay of Dramatic Poesy*). 18. Comparison of Dryden's *All for Love* with Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra.* 19. Examples of the treatment of Shakespeare's plays (Lounsbury's *Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist,* ch. VIII).

CHAPTER XIII

THE AUGUSTAN AGE

1700–1744

The eighteenth century is called the age of prose. In its most brilliant literary period, the reign of Queen Anne, the great authors with one exception were prose writers. The subject-matter of the poetry is essentially prose matter; poetry is concerned, for the most part, with criticism, satire, didactic and philosophic discourse. The influence of French classicism, though more apparent in the poetry, was perhaps more beneficial to prose, giving to it the needed qualities of directness, clearness, and grace. There was an almost total absence of spontaneity and idealism. It was an age of small things and petty pursuits. There were no large human interests, no visions of new empires, and no dreams of Utopias. The literature appeals to the head, not to the heart, and is saved from intolerable dullness by intellectual brilliancy and the graces and piquancies generally included in the term "wit." It is a town literature; the beauties of the country and the wonders of nature are unknown. The chief interest of authors is the every-day conduct of men and women in society and politics. "The proper study of mankind is man," wrote Pope, and he wrote for his age.

General Characteristics of the Age

Within these limitations, this literature was brought to a high degree of perfection. In no other age has writing been so studiously cultivated on its artistic side. The classical move-

ment begun at the Restoration reached its climax in the age of Anne, which believed itself to be comparable with the age of Augustus in Latin literature, the golden age of Virgil and Horace. Hence it was proudly called the Augustan age. Classicism, as interpreted at the French court, was supreme. "Gothic to the last degree" was the fashionable phrase of contempt for any departure from the accepted standards. Bishop Burnet wrote of Milan Cathedral: "It hath nothing to commend it of architecture, it being built in the rude Gothic manner." Gardens were laid out in the symmetrical designs of Versailles and filled with trees trimmed into globes and pyramids, as if the object were to force nature to be unnatural. "We see the marks of the scissors upon every plant and bush," says Addison. We now smile at reformers who thought it more important to be "correct" than to be sincere and natural, and who deprecated any appearance of emotion or "enthusiasm" as a vulgarity. But we have to acknowledge that there was much gain, if some loss, to English genius in this self-imposed discipline and restraint.

Classical Character of the Age

After the revolution of 1688 efforts were made to reform social life. The "Society for the Reformation of Manners" appeared in 1692, commended and supported by the Throne. But restraint in morals and manners, as in art, tended to artificiality; beneath a polished exterior there remained much hideous coarseness. A fashionable world of red-heeled shoes and French furbelows, most scrupulously attentive to the etiquette of the snuff-box and fan, could hardly take itself seriously. A great author or statesman appeared in public gorgeously decked in flowered silks, lace ruffles, and curled periwig, and at home concealed his shaved head with a nightcap: in neither place was he a natural man. The women wore patches and false eyebrows, and typified the shams of the day in their inflated headgear and hooped petticoats. Their education seldom extended be-

Artificiality of the Age

yond a French novel and the game of basset. Queen Mary wrote in her coronation Bible: "This book was given to the King and I at our crownation." Lord Chesterfield, the mentor of fashionable conduct, writes of women to his son: "A man of sense only trifles with them, plays with them, humors and flatters them," but "neither consults them about, nor trusts them with, serious matters." A fair test of the civilization of any age is its attitude toward women.

In politics party spirit was fierce and corrupting. Society, literature, and religion were alike partisan. The ladies were divided into High Church and Low, says Swift, and "out of zeal for religion had hardly time to say their prayers." Even the cats and dogs, he declared, were Whig and Tory. Books were judged by the politics of the authors. Nearly every writer was in the service of some great patron, and for a flattering poem or an abusive satire might obtain a good position in church or state. Never was literature so closely identified with politics. Walpole paid £50,000 to writers for defending his ministry. But politics did not furnish excitement enough. Gambling and speculation prevailed with wild recklessness, and the most distinguished people were impoverished when the South Sea Bubble burst in 1720. The Duke of Devonshire lost an estate in a single game, and a son of Lord Abercorn, writes Swift, "t'other day got a prize in a lottery of £4000." And so the game of life went on, an elegant game of chance, turning as it were upon a shuffle of the cards. In the prose of Swift, Steele, and Addison, and the poetry of Pope, this life is faithfully mirrored with all its kaleidoscopic colors.

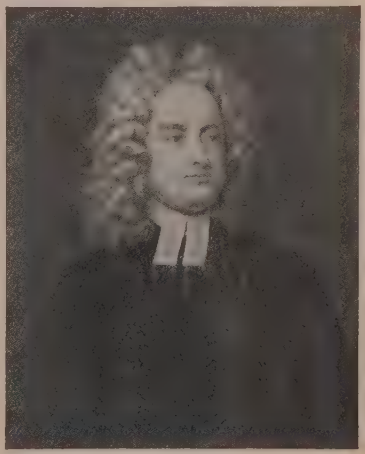
Politics and Gambling

Jonathan Swift

1667–1745

The most powerful prose writer and satirist of the Augustan age was Jonathan Swift, whose life story is a painful tragedy

and whose literary fame is a paradox. The one book by which he is chiefly known was written in the spirit of hopeless pessimism and bitter contempt of his fellow-men, and it is now a children's classic. Literature was an accident rather than a purpose with him; he wished for greatness in politics and the church, but the greatness of his fame rests upon *Gulliver's Travels.*



JONATHAN SWIFT

Swift was born in Dublin, but of English parents, and his fortunes were linked with Ireland through life. He began life in poverty. An uncle gave him his education. From Trinity College, Dublin, he was graduated at eighteen, and became secretary to Sir William Temple, who was a distant relative of his family. Sir William was a statesman, scholar, and "person of quality" of wide distinction. In his service Swift remained ten years, chafing his proud spirit into rebellion at times against this menial position, but improving the opportunity for acquaintance with politics and society, and for study in the ample library of Moor Park. Here he became acquainted with Hester Johnson as a beautiful child of eight years, to whom he acted as tutor and for whom he formed a profound affection that became the one soothing influence in a long life of bitterness and ruined hopes.

Early Life of Swift

While at Moor Park Swift wrote his first satires, *The Battle of the Books* and *The Tale of a Tub*, which were published in 1704. Temple had engaged in the controversy started in

France over the comparative merits of ancient and modern literature, citing the *Letters of Phalaris* as an example of the superiority of the ancients. The famous Greek scholar, Richard Bentley, showed that this work was only a forgery. He was in turn answered by the scholars of Cambridge, and a great war of the Grecians ensued. Swift made a clever mockery of the affair, representing the books in the King's library, ancient and modern, as engaged in a grand battle, with many sharp jibes at pedantry and much unjust ridicule of Bentley. But the interest of such satire is transient. One phrase from this satire Matthew Arnold happily employed in his essay, *Sweetness and Light*, and gave to it the permanency of familiar quotation. "The difference is," says Æsop, speaking for the ancients, "that instead of dirt and poison we have rather chosen to fill our hives with honey and wax, thus furnishing mankind with the two noblest things, which are sweetness and light."

The Battle of the Books

More important is *The Tale of a Tub*, a satire on religious dissensions, with side thrusts at the "true critics" and pretentious scholars of the period. The whole historic field of religious controversy is covered. It is a masterpiece of its kind, written with a ruthless humor and irreverence that probably cost Swift a bishopric. Thus the tale begins:—

The Tale of a Tub

"Once upon a time, there was a man who had three sons," Peter [Romanism], Martin [Anglicanism], and Jack [Calvinism]. When about to die he gave to each a new coat [Christian religion], with "full instructions" in his will [Bible] about wearing the coats. They were also commanded "to live together in one house like brethren." When they went out to seek their fortunes, fashionable people remarked upon their plain clothes, "and it happened that before they were a month in town great shoulder-knots came up." What should they do? "In this unhappy case they went immediately to consult their father's will, read it over and over, but not a word of the shoulder-knot." But one of the brothers, "who happened to be more book-learned than the other two, said he had found an expedient. It is true, said he, there is nothing here in this will, *totidem verbis*, making mention of shoulder-knots; but I dare conjecture, we may find them

inclusive or *totidem syllabis*." But not even the first syllable could be found. "There are yet hopes," said the learned brother, "for though we cannot find them *totidem verbis*, nor *totidem syllabis*, I dare engage we shall make them out *tertio modo*, or *totidem literis*. This discovery was also highly commended, upon which they fell once more to the scrutiny and soon picked out S, H, O, U, L, D, E, R; when the same planet, enemy to their repose, had wonderfully contrived that a K was not to be found." But it occurred to the learned brother "that K was a modern illegitimate letter, unknown to the learned ages," and therefore knot should be spelled with a C. "Upon this all farther difficulty vanished; shoulder-knots were made out clearly to be *jure paterno;* and our three gentlemen swaggered with as large and as flaunting ones as the best."

In despair of other means of independence, Swift had taken orders in the church, and at the death of Temple he went to Ireland as chaplain to Lord Berkeley, through whose aid he obtained the living of Laracor. Here he ministered to about fifteen persons. Soon he was in London again, busily engaged in political and literary adventures. The two satires had given him fame, and already Addison hailed him as "the greatest genius of his age." Incidentally he amused the town with the *Predictions by Isaac Bickerstaff*, a facetious attack upon the almanac-maker, Partridge, whose death he predicted for a certain day. When the time came he wrote a circumstantial account of the quack astrologer's death, and insisted that he was substantially dead, after the victim's protest that he was alive and still in business. In a similar but more serious vein of solemn mockery was the ironical *Argument against Abolishing Christianity*, aimed at the Deists and free-thinkers of the day. Becoming closely associated with Harley and Bolingbroke, leaders of the Tories, Swift wrote pamphlets, edited the *Examiner*, the Tory newspaper, and won a position of distinction and power in public affairs that warranted him in the expectation of a good church appointment. Probably no other man of letters ever wielded so strong an influence among men of affairs—

Churchman, Satirist, and Politician

> Caressed by ministers of state,
> Of half mankind the dread and hate.

After long waiting, due partly to the Queen's scruples about *The Tale of a Tub*, he was meagerly rewarded with the deanship of St. Patrick's, Dublin, and was banished to Ireland for life.

Journal to Stella

During these years in London, Swift wrote the *Journal to Stella*, a series of letters to Hester Johnson in which he described in an intimate and gossipy way the daily events of his life. The letters are a vivid illustration of politics and society, and furnish the fullest revelation of Swift's character,—his pride and arrogance, his tenderness, and his strange, loveless affections. Stella loved Swift devotedly, and was rivaled in her love by "Vannessa," a Miss Vanhomrigh. Over Swift's relations with these two beautiful women, tragic in their final sadness, there will always hang a mystery. But the story of Stella, "the pure star in that dark and tempestuous life," is the one sweet and wholly humane element in all that we know of Swift.

His Work for Ireland

The wrongs perpetrated upon the Irish people through the greed and tyranny of the English government aroused Swift's righteous wrath, and in the *Drapier's Letters*, written to prevent the circulation of a debased coinage known as "Wood's halfpence," he made himself a national hero. In *A Modest Proposal*, the most bitter and ghastly piece of irony ever written with a serious purpose, he suggested that in view of the general poverty the young children should be used for food. "I grant this food would be somewhat dear, and therefore very proper for landlords, who, as they have already devoured most of the parents, seem to have best title to the children." All of Swift's satires were published anonymously, but the authorship was never mistaken. In this instance he was even threatened with arrest by the government.

While writing the *Drapier's Letters* Swift was engaged upon *Gulliver's Travels*, a work that is to children a fascinating wonder-book of marvelous adventure, and to grown people a terrible satire upon all humanity. Captain Gulliver, like

Robinson Crusoe, is wrecked upon strange shores and relates his experiences with a serious, matter-of-fact simplicity that makes reality of the wildest imaginings. His first adventure is in Lilliput, where the people are only six inches in height, but act just like Queen Anne's subjects. The Lilliputian politicians cut fine capers on a tight rope to gain the favor of the emperor; they divide into factions over the question of high-heeled or low-heeled shoes; and a civil war is caused by a dispute as to whether an egg should be broken at the big or the little end. With great cleverness the allegorical narrative is made to illustrate the pettiness and folly of ordinary human affairs.

Gulliver's Travels

The second voyage is to Brobdingnag, where the people are giants sixty feet tall, who look with contempt on Gulliver as the representative of some inferior race of beings. They are amazed at what he tells them about methods of government and "inhuman ideas" of war that prevail among his people. The King of Brobdingnag "confined the knowledge of government within very narrow bounds, to common sense and reason, to justice and lenity," and "he gave it for his opinion that whosoever could make two ears of corn or two blades of grass to grow upon a spot of ground where only one grew before would deserve better of mankind and do more essential service to his country than the whole race of politicians put together."

Second Voyage

In the third voyage the scientists and philosophers are held up to ridicule. Laputa is a flying island, sustained in the air by a huge magnet. The inhabitants spend their lives in abstruse speculations. In their Academy of Lagado great scholars are engaged with projects for increasing human welfare, such as a method of converting ice into gunpowder, and a "project for extracting sunbeams out of cucumbers, which were to be put in vials hermetically sealed, and let out to warm the air in raw inclement weather."

Third Voyage

The fourth voyage is to the land of the Houyhnhnms, a race of intelligent horses, who are served by Yahoos, or human beings degenerated into animals. Here Swift's satire becomes fierce and repellent; his genius runs to madness and his imagination riots in repulsive pictures of degraded human nature. Mankind with its shams stripped off and its bestial instincts exposed is disgusting even to a well-bred horse. This is the conclusion reached by a diseased mind in its persistent contemplation of evil.

Fourth Voyage

Swift's place among the poets is held on slender poetic merit. He began his career with stilted odes of the Cowley type. Dryden read them and with blunt truthfulness said: "Cousin Swift, you will never be a poet." He wrote no more odes, but amused his friends with much light and generally satirical verse modeled after Butler. For personal revelations he seemed to choose verse, as in *Cademus and Vannessa* and the strange *Verses on the Death of Dr. Swift.*

Swift's Poetry

"Proper words in proper places," was Swift's definition of style, well exemplified in his prose. There is a naturalness about his expression seldom found in other authors. He aims directly at the fact, disdaining all literary ornament. We can believe him when he says that he "never leaned on his elbow to consider what he should write." His prose is naked and powerful. He is a supreme satirist, and irony is his most deadly weapon. Swift and Addison represent two leading types of prose style. Swift has unadorned vigor and strength, Addison has grace and charm; the one compels assent, the other wins it.

Prose Style

The life of Swift was a prolonged experience of bitterness. His pride and ambition were imprisoned. From boyhood, he confessed to Pope, he had wished he "might be treated as a lord." In ability he was equal to the greatest men, yet the fruits of all his endeavor were only the rewards obtained by inferior men. He ought to have been a bishop, and became

only a dean. He could help others to honors and great places which he could not obtain for himself. With the disappointment and chagrin of thwarted purpose came arrogance and contempt. In the drawing-rooms, he writes to Stella, "I am so proud I make all the lords come up to me."

A Bitter Life and a Strange Character

It is impossible to explain the perversity and mystery of his character. He scandalized the church which he loyally defended. His life was pure, while his language was often gross and repulsive. Poverty was his earliest enemy, yet he scorned wealth. "I never got a farthing by anything I wrote," he says, "except once by Mr. Pope's prudent management for me." He was stingy to himself and generous to his friends. He dominated statesmen and fascinated women, but there was neither love nor sympathy in his heart. With cold intellectual severity he detected all of the contemptible in human nature, but none of the good; therefore his criticism and philosophy ended in pessimism and misanthropy. And yet beneath his misanthropy there is always a qualifying vein of manliness, a zeal for justice and truth that is a stimulating tonic. But the satirist, generally, destroys rather than creates, and therefore occupies an inferior place in art. The great artist works with his face toward the stars.

We may censure the wild aberrations of Swift, but we ought rather to pity his loneliness and misery. When all England was praising him, Archbishop King declared him to be "the most unhappy man on earth." Physical disease added to the torment of his mind. Gazing at a dying tree, he remarked: "I shall be like that tree and die first at the top," a prophesy fulfilled in the breaking down of all his faculties into final insanity. He died in 1745 and was placed beside Stella in St. Patrick's Cathedral. "An immense genius," says Thackeray, "an awful downfall and ruin. So great a man he seems to me that thinking of him is like thinking of an empire falling."

The Tragic Conclusion

Addison and Steele

1672–1719; 1672–1729

The essay as we know it in our periodicals was invented by Steele and perfected by Addison. From the *Tatler* and the *Spectator* have grown in two hundred years the multitude of modern magazines. From Sidney to Dryden the essay was experimental and imitative; Addison established it as one of the great types of modern literature. Addison, Goldsmith, Lamb, Irving, Holmes, and Lowell are all of the same literary family.

Origin of the Essay

Joseph Addison, born in 1672, was the son of the Rev. Launcelot Addison, afterwards dean of Lichfield. He was educated at the Charter House school in London and at Oxford, where the visitor is reminded of him by "Addison's Walk" under the elms of Magdalen College. His classical acquirement was large, especially in Latin literature, and his Latin poems brought him early distinction. In the critical fashion of the day, he wrote in his twenty-second year a rhymed *Account of the Greatest English Poets*, in which Shakespeare is not mentioned and Spenser's "mystic tale" is pronounced unfit to "charm an understanding age." Though saturated with classicism, his mind outgrew these judgments.

Early Years

Addison seemed always to be the pet of fortune. In 1699 his friend Charles Montagu, soon known as Lord Halifax, obtained for him a pension of £300, with which to prepare himself for service to the state. He spent four years in study and travel on the continent. In Paris he met the great critic Boileau. In Italy he visited with delight the scenes associated with his favorite poets:—

Foreign Travel and Study

> Poetic fields encompass me around,
> And still I seem to tread on classic ground;
> For here the Muse so oft her harp has strung,
> That not a mountain rears its head unsung.

It was quite fitting that he should be the first to use the phrase "classic ground," since nothing modern interested him either in literature or in art. The literary result of his travels was the *Letter to Lord Halifax*, containing his best poetry, his *Dialogues upon Medals*, curiously and richly ornamented with classic lore, and *Remarks on Italy*, a description of his experience, in smooth-flowing prose.

JOSEPH ADDISON

Losing his pension by the death of William III, Addison returned to London and for a time lived like any Grub Street poet "in a garret up three pairs of stairs." But his lucky star did not fail him. He was taken into the Kit-Kat Club, where great men in politics and letters were intimately associated, and in 1704 was invited by Godolphin to celebrate in verse Marlborough's victory at Blenheim. For this *The Campaign* was written, a prosy poem indeed, but well adapted to the purpose of lofty compliment. It was received with great enthusiasm and the poet was rewarded with the position of Under Secretary of State. Henceforth Addison was well cared for by his political friends. In 1708 he became secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland; he entered Parliament, but was too timid to make speeches; in 1717 he reached the height of his political career in the office of Secretary of State. So popular was he, said Swift, "if he had a mind to be chosen king he would hardly be refused."

A Servant of the State

Political duties were always seasoned with literature. In

1706 the unsuccessful opera *Rosamond* was performed, revealing a pleasant lyrical vein not elsewhere found in his work. A comedy called *The Drummer* was also unsuccessful. His most famous poetical effort is the tragedy *Cato*, written in devoted obedience to the laws of classic drama. It is in polished and flowing blank verse, with many beauties of thought and expression, but is a cold, lifeless performance from a dramatic point of view. Its success was phenomenal. Whigs and Tories tried to outclap each other in their praise, each party professing as its own the exalted patriotism of the noble Cato. There were translations of the play into French, Italian, and Latin, and Voltaire pronounced it to be "the first correct tragedy" in English. It is now known only by familiar quotations and Cato's fine soliloquy on immortality, beginning, "Plato, thou reasonest well."

His Dramatic Experiments

While Addison was in Ireland the opportunity for his greatest achievement was created by his friend Steele. Richard Steele was born in Dublin in 1672 and was a scholar at the Charter House with Addison, whom from boyhood he loved as a friend and worshiped as an idol. He left Oxford without his degree to join the army and became a Captain of Fusileers. His first publication was *The Christian Hero*, a little manual of personal ethics, the design of which was, as he frankly explained, "to fix upon his own mind a strong impression of virtue and religion in opposition to a stronger propensity towards unwarrantable pleasures." Naturally he was teased by his companions for this paradoxical goodness. "I was now reckoned," he says, "a disagreeable fellow." Steele's precepts and practices were generally at war with each other. "His life was spent in sinning and repenting," says Macaulay, rather ungenerously. But he was a genuine reformer, and when not absorbed in reforming himself he was earnestly engaged in reforming society. In an ignoble age it was heroic to resolve, as he did, "to do what I can to

Richard Steele

promote noble things." Like other wits whose services were valuable, he was favored by the government, being appointed editor of the official *Gazette*, a position that afforded special advantages for his greatest enterprise, the founding of the *Tatler* in 1709.

The popular coffee-houses of the period became a social in-

VIEW OF MAGDALEN COLLEGE, OXFORD

stitution of wide influence. Practically all men of intelligence frequented these resorts and in the comfortable enjoyment of a cup of coffee and a pipe, before a blazing hearth, discussed the news, the government, the theater, the latest poem, or the latest fashion in wigs. The upper and middle classes here mingled in a new democracy of ideas; public opinion was created, and a new social order was established. The court now divided its control of public sentiment with the coffee-house. Such free intercourse not only awakens thought, but also enforces a familiar and unstudied

The Coffee-houses

expression. Hitherto scholars had studied mankind in the library and conversed with the world in the unnatural language of books. In the coffee-houses manners acquired a gracious and dignified familiarity, and language assumed the ease and freedom of fine conversation.

Steele devised the *Tatler* as the organ of this new coffee-house society. It was a single folio sheet, issued three times a week. The special tastes and interests of the leading coffee-houses were represented; news articles, for example, were from St. James's, poetry from Will's, and learning from the Grecian. Obviously, political matters would have to be treated discreetly, and were soon avoided altogether. At first Steele did all the writing alone, calling himself "Isaac Bickerstaff," a character borrowed from Swift. Later Addison became a regular contributor and wrote forty-two of the two hundred and seventy-one *Tatler* essays.

The Tatler

Instruction made agreeable and entertaining was Steele's purpose,—"to rally all those singularities of human life which obstruct anything that is truly good and great," to bring into conduct a reasonable morality, Puritanism with its rough points rubbed off. He discusses his ideal of a gentleman; vigorously attacks dueling, gambling, intemperance, and profligacy; pokes fun at the fops and dandies, the "order of insipids"; criticises the drama; and dwells upon the importance of the home affections. In the story of Jenny Distaff we find the embryo of the domestic novel. Especially is Steele loyal to the "fair sex," being the first Augustan author to treat woman with a manly respect. His picture of Lady Elizabeth Hastings in No. 49, a woman so high-souled that "to love her was a liberal education," was constructive criticism of a surprising originality. By such wise and ingenious preaching, sugared with wit and humor, the *Tatler* achieved its purpose. "It is incredible," wrote the poet Gay, "to conceive the effect his writings have had upon the town."

Contents and Purpose of the Tatler

Early in 1711 the *Tatler* was suddenly discontinued, and two months later the *Spectator* was launched upon its glorious career. It was issued daily and continued with increasing popularity for two years. In the new enterprise Addison's personality was dominant. To the motives already well defined by Steele, he added higher standards of execution, greater variety, and a more artistic quality. In the introductory essay, he described some of his own qualities in the character of the silent "spectator of mankind." In the second paper Steele described the "Club," composed of typical representatives of society: the lawyer, the merchant, the clergyman, the society gallant, and the country squire, the immortal Sir Roger de Coverley. Only the last character was fully developed, and this became the special property of Addison, who bestowed upon the good knight the tenderest graces of his art, making Sir Roger one of the most real and lovable characters in literature.

The Spectator

Addison's ambition was "to bring philosophy out of closets and libraries, schools and colleges, to dwell in clubs and assemblies, at tea-tables, and in coffee-houses." His method was "to enliven morality with wit and to temper wit with morality"; and with Steele's aid he actually succeeded in making morality fashionable. Said Dr. Johnson: "He has restored virtue to its dignity, and taught innocence not to be ashamed." This was accomplished by his generous and sympathetic humanity, keen insight, and persuasive good sense; by his playful fancy, and his rich, sunny humor, equaled only by Shakespeare; by his persistent irony, administering to vice and folly a gentle but continuous chastisement; and by his incomparable style, unaffected yet artistic, varied with perfect adaptation to different themes—"familiar but not coarse, and elegant but not ostentatious."

Purpose of the Spectator

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu declared Addison to be "the best companion in the world," and such he still is to any one who gives an unrestrained hour to the *Spectator*. He is de-

lightful company everywhere, in the London streets, at the club, at the opera, in my lady's drawing-room, in Westminster Abbey; and to be introduced by him to Sir Roger de Coverley is one of the high privileges conferred by literature. Nothing escapes the observant eye of the "silent man." With humorous seriousness he "speculates" upon stage lions, sign-boards, headdresses, friendship, pin-money, religion, immortality—anything that affords a text for his little lay sermon. How delicious is his raillery upon women's foibles,—party patches, "that little modish machine" the fan, and Leonora's library, whose books were bought "because she had heard them praised or because she had seen the authors of them." There was "Locke on Human Understanding, with a paper of patches in it," and "Clelia, which opened of itself in the place that describes two lovers in a bower." The purpose of Swift's satire was to heap ridicule on its victims and raise a laugh at their expense; Addison's satire was mirthful and never malicious, genial and alluring, compelling its victims to join in the general laughter.

Qualities of the Spectator

But Addison was more than a social reformer; he gave new impulses to literary taste. His pretty tales and allegories were the first suggestions of the short story; he created an interest in Milton by the fine critical essays on *Paradise Lost;* and anticipated the "romantic revival" in his praise of the old ballad of *Chevy Chase.* He perfected the character sketch, and his use of the letter as a literary form gave to Richardson the hint for the epistolary novel.

The friendship of Addison and Steele is one of the pleasantest episodes in literary history, and a deep pity it is that in the last year of Addison's life they were alienated by differences of political opinion. Their personalities supplemented each other. Steele was creative, impulsive, and enthusiastic; his virtues were always imperiled by his frail will. Addison was meditative and decorous, amiable with intimates, with others a little cold and austere.

Addison and Steele Compared

Among their associates the one was "Dick Steele," the other, "Mr. Addison." Steele wrote hastily and carelessly, but from the heart; Addison wrote with critical serenity, always attentive to the mellowed experience of the ancients. "Addison's papers are faultless in their art," says Austin Dobson, but "for phrases glowing with the white heat of a generous emotion, for sentences that throb with manly pity or courageous indignation, we must turn to the essays of Steele."

The *Spectator* was followed by the *Guardian* and the *Englishman*, written by Addison and Steele; and other writers followed with a host of imitations, but the original success could not be repeated. Steele was drawn by his restless temperament into politics. Addison, prosperous and famous, surrounded by his "little senate" at Button's, ruled supreme in the realm of letters. There was just one rival near the throne, the illustrious poet, Alexander Pope, and with him he quarreled. The merits of the affair have never been fully determined, but it unquestionably originated in the jealous and malicious spirit of Pope, the "wasp of Twickenham." His satirical portrait of Addison as "Atticus," however, is a shrewd characterization with an undeniable coloring of truth. In 1716 Addison married the Countess of Warwick, and tradition says that he married "discord with a noble wife." He now lived at Holland House, made famous by a succession of illustrious inmates. He died in 1719 and was buried in Westminster Abbey, the nation's just tribute to his splendid career and immense fame.

Addison's Last Years

Steele lived until 1729. He was knighted by King George for his services to the Whigs; he was busied for a time with the successful management of Drury Lane Theater, and at all times with the less successful management of his private affairs, which were always drifting between poverty and affluence. No "human document" was ever more delightfully open and genuine than the four hundred letters written to his "dear Prue," generally to

Steele's Frailties

soften her just indignation at his irregularities. We sympathize with the wife, who could not always subsist patiently on the extravagant admiration of "good Dick," yet we have to agree with Dobson that "his virtues redeemed his frailties."

Daniel Defoe

1660–1731

Among the Augustan wits, but not one of them, Daniel Defoe lived his singular life of political and literary adventure. He was rebel, merchant, tile manufacturer, bankrupt, "thirteen times rich and poor," as he says, journalist, prisoner in Newgate, government spy, novelist, and always a preacher of practical morality and the religion of dissent. For many years his life was one of elaborate duplicity. "A wonderful mixture of knave and patriot," says his biographer. As an adroit politician and skillful writer, he served first the Whigs and then the Tories, and finally served both parties at the same time, with imminent danger of exposure and ruin. Political morality was at its lowest ebb and he accepted its standards. "Necessity makes an honest man a knave," seems to have been the apology for his own life as well as for the lives of the thieves and rascals of his novels. But much must be forgiven the author of a book that has delighted millions and that can never grow old.

Singular Life of Defoe

Defoe was born probably in 1660, the son of a London butcher. His parents being dissenters, he received only such education as was obtainable outside the universities, from which dissenters were excluded by the government. He certainly acquired a wide knowledge of history, geography, and the literature of travel and adventure. Swift referred to him as "that illiterate fellow, I forget his name," a contempt shared generally by contemporary writers. In reply to such taunts Defoe boasted that he spoke

His Education

five languages and read a sixth. In 1701 he published *The True-born Englishman*, an argument twisted into rhyme intended to allay the prejudice against King William as a foreigner, proving that—

> A true-born Englishman's a contradiction,
> In speech an irony, in fact a fiction.

He next appeared with *The Shortest Way with Dissenters*, an ironical pamphlet suggesting to the government that "whoever was found at a conventicle should be banished the kingdom and the preacher be hanged." Defoe's purpose was to ridicule the rabid intolerance of the High Church party, and for his impudence he was put in the pillory and imprisoned. But he turned the laugh again on the government with a *Hymn to the Pillory*. After about four months he was released from prison. He then established his *Review* in 1704, and became a powerful journalist. *Robinson Crusoe* appeared in 1719, and, encouraged by its marvelous success and large profits, he spent the remainder of his life mainly in writing fiction. In 1731 he died in obscurity in Ropemaker's Alley, and was buried in Bunhill Fields.

His Writings

Defoe was a journalist by natural endowment, and a prodigious pamphleteer. He was connected with twenty periodicals. The most recent list of his works contains three hundred and sixty-five titles, and some three hundred other books and pamphlets have been ascribed to him. Journalism was in its crude beginnings. Important items of news were gathered into pamphlets, or "newsletters," and issued irregularly; later such publications appeared as weeklies and tri-weeklies, like the *Flying Post* and the *Post Boy*. Of this type was the *Review*, in which Defoe gave summaries of the news and discussed current events humorously, seriously, satirically, and always with a liveliness that secured attention. In his column called "The Scandalous Club" he anticipated the *Tatler*. He had the journalist's instinct for

Journalism and Defoe

a telling "story"; he invented the "interview," and is without a superior in modern times in the art of reporting. If there was a picturesque character or sensation in the town, he would be out promptly with a minute account, supplying necessary details from his imagination and writing with an air of convincing veracity. The ghost of "one Mrs. Veal" appeared and he wrote a wonderful *True Relation* of the event that fed the public appetite for the supernatural. In this manner he wrote supposititious biographies of the highwayman Jonathan Wild and the disreputable fortune-teller, Duncan Campbell.

From such inventions it is but a step to pure fiction. The novels grew naturally out of his journalism. *Robinson Crusoe* is a masterpiece of journalistic art, the art of vivid description of facts and skillful use of circumstantial details. It does not matter that the facts never happened; the method is the same. Defoe had heard of Alexander Selkirk's adventures on a desert island and that was basis enough for his narrative. He was well practiced in methods of "lying like truth," deceiving readers with invented facts plausibly recited, and now when nearly sixty years old his ripened genius for deception produced its masterpiece. "He had the most marvelous power ever known," says Leslie Stephen, "of giving verisimilitude to his fictions." Modern writers of realistic novels have all been students of Defoe.

Robinson Crusoe

He humorously described his own style as "a natural infirmity of homely plain writing." This straightforward, idiomatic simplicity of language, bearing always an open face of sincerity, was partly the device of his genius and partly due to the logical temper of his age. One trick he employed with artistic cleverness. His narratives are autobiographic; the narrator describes things as an eye-witness, acting even as the impartial judge in sifting facts and weighing evidence, and the reader forgets, as is intended, that the narrator himself is pure invention. Dickens complained that *Robinson Crusoe* never moves one to laughter

Defoe's Style

or tears. Defoe had nothing to do with sentiment, emotion, or psychology. His novels are without plot and without analysis or development of character, and thus, strictly speaking, are not novels at all. He could merely tell a story of objective adventure, but he told it with a perfection unapproached until the author of *Treasure Island* appeared.

Charles Lamb, with his usual critical kindliness, protested against the "excluding partiality" that has set *Robinson Crusoe* so far above Defoe's "secondary novels," *Captain Singleton*, *Colonel Jack*, *Moll Flanders*, and *Roxana*. But these stories read like imitations of a great original, and the realism of their thieves, pirates, and brutish women is now intolerable. One book of these last years retains its interest, the *Journal of the Plague Year*, in which the terrible scenes of the great London plague of 1665 are described with a vividness of minute details and matter-of-fact style that holds the attention like a living horror. The book was long regarded as veritable history; and even though it is largely invention, its facts are probable enough to be as good as true. This remarkable book may be regarded as symbolic of Defoe's life and work, an indeterminable mixture of falseness and truth.

Secondary Novels; Journal of the Plague Year

Alexander Pope

1688–1744

Alexander Pope is the epitome in verse of the Augustan age. Every ideal, belief, fashion, and foible of the time is exquisitely compressed and preserved in his lucid couplets. No other English poet was ever so completely in harmony with his age or so completely filled his age with his presence.

Pope was born in London, and his childhood was spent in a country home near Windsor Forest. As his parents were Roman Catholics, to whom the universities were then closed, he was debarred from ordinary avenues of education and preferment.

From childhood he was an invalid, dwarfed and deformed; his life, he says, was a "long disease." His education was obtained largely from reading, guided by his inclinations. "In a few years I had dipped into a great number of the English, French, Italian, Latin, and Greek poets," he says, "and got the languages by hunting after the stories." Of none of the foreign languages had he a scholarly possession. It is an odd circumstance that the chief representative of eighteenth-century classicism should have missed the classical training. Among English poets, Spenser and Waller were his early favorites and Dryden was his acknowledged master. Once when a mere boy he had the joy of seeing this great poet enthroned at Will's. "As yet a child," he tells us, "I lisped in numbers," and an indulgent father corrected his rhymes. "He did nothing else but write and read," says his sister. He read the *Iliad* in translation, and made a play from it for his companions, and wrote four books of a grand epic, which he soon burned. The earliest poem that has survived is an *Ode on Solitude*, written at twelve.

Life of Pope

The old dramatist Wycherley, with whom Pope formed a strange friendship, introduced him to town life, but found that his "little, tender, crazy carcass" could not endure the fashionable excesses. Indeed, his fragile health always enforced an abstemious and retired manner of life. When wealth came with his *Homer*, he settled in a pleasing villa at Twickenham on the Thames. Here within easy reach of the gay town he worked at poetry in the quiet seclusion of his garden, with its little temples, "artful wilderness," and wonderful "grotto." Here he entertained his few friends, Gay, Swift, Bolingbroke, Warburton, and the amiable Spence, whose *Anecdotes* reveal so much of the poet's personality. Here a little sweetness was given to his bitter life by the devoted friendship of Martha Blount, for whom he probably felt the deepest affection of which his arid nature was capable. And here in 1744 he died.

Twickenham

Justice must be tempered with compassion in judging Pope's unamiable character. His brilliant mind and rickety body were pitiful companions. He wished to shine in society with the other resplendent wits, and, painfully conscious of his defects, was morbidly sensitive, jealous, and morose. A hearty laugh was never heard from him. He tortured himself with imaginary injuries, turning mole-hills into mountains of offense. He was a dangerous friend, for a groundless suspicion might change him to an implacable enemy. Vanity became a disease that perverted his moral sense and betrayed him into unmanly subterfuge and trickery. "He hardly drank tea without a stratagem." Once he spoke of himself as "equivocating pretty genteelly"—a mild estimate of his aptitude for this art. He changed the dates of early poems to prove his precosity. He secretly contrived to have his own letters published, while openly trying to suppress their publication. To trace his devious ways has cost the most patient and skillful detective work of modern editors.

Character of Pope

ALEXANDER POPE

These were his vices, some of which became a kind of mania; but against them must be set his virtues. He loved his poetic art, cultivated it devotedly, and elevated its standards of workmanship. He lived by his art alone and scorned the patronage that other authors sought and accepted. He loved his parents; the tenderest passage in all his poetry was written of his mother. Withal, his intellectual achievement was the pride of the age

and the nation. Not even the enemies whom he flayed most mercilessly questioned his supremacy in poetry.

The critic Walsh suggested to Pope that there had been great English poets, "but never one great poet that was correct." The hint fell upon rich soil. To be the exemplar in English poetry of the perfection of the classical style was the goal for which he steadily strove. Early emulous of Theocritus and Virgil, he published in 1709 some *Pastorals*, written at sixteen, which contain little that is pastoral except the form, being the mere dry shining shells of classic pastoral, the life gone out of them. Similarly *Windsor Forest*, inspired by Denham's *Cooper's Hill*, is a description of nature that flows with a smooth, cold dignity, like the neighboring Thames in winter. Pope knew nature only in books and could not sing his "sylvan strains" without the aid of Pan, Pomona, and "blushing Flora"; but generally, it should be said, when nature appears in Augustan poetry she is in the disguise of a theatrical Arcadia. The resounding rhetoric of the *Messiah* once filled readers with wonder and lesser poets with despair. The *Ode on St. Cecilia's Day*, with its brassy clangor, is an evidence of Pope's lack of the lyric gift. In *Eloisa to Abelard* and the *Elegy to the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady* he made his nearest approach to real pathos and passion. But Pope was essentially ignorant of the human heart.

Early and Minor Poems

The *Essay on Criticism*, published in 1711, but written in 1709, made Pope famous. This work of a youth of twenty-one was at once accepted as an authority. The poem is based on Horace's *Ars Poetica* and Boileau's *Art Poétique*, and summarizes the familiar maxims of writing and criticism common to all ages. "A metrical multiplication table of commonplaces," De Quincey calls it. But Pope had the singular power of polishing the commonplace into neatly pointed epigrams and wise-looking aphorisms that seem new and stick to the memory forever.

Essay on Criticism, 1711

One may be fairly well acquainted with the *Essay*, without ever having read it. Everybody knows that "fools rush in where angels fear to tread"; that "a little learning is a dangerous thing"; that "to err is human, to forgive, divine"; that poets often "snatch a grace beyond the reach of art"; that in writing words are "alike fantastic, if too new or old"; and that, when all is said, good writing is mainly a matter of "good sense." There are faults in the poem; "wit" is rhymed ten times and "sense" twelve, and both words are used ambiguously, and the word "nature" seems to mean almost anything. But there are more felicities than faults, including an occasional touch of imagination like the comparison—

> Hills peep o'er hills and Alps on Alps arise,

which Dr. Johnson thought the finest simile in the language.

In 1712 *The Rape of the Lock* carried Pope's fame throughout Europe. Here was a masterpiece of its kind that for graceful and elegant badinage and sparkling vivacity was the equal or superior of anything that the French had produced. The poem is a mixture of mock-heroic social satire and pure fancy, an epic of the tea-urn and boudoir. Lord Petre had clipped a saucy lock from the head of Miss Arabella Fermor at an ombre party, and Pope undertook to laugh away the ensuing quarrel between the two families. It is a proof of Pope's genius that from such trivial material he should have made a poem to outlast the ages. In the second edition he added the "machinery" of the sylphs, the creatures of a delicate fancy that are distant descendants of Shakespeare's Ariel. "It is the triumph of insignificance," says Hazlitt, "the apotheosis of foppery and folly; it is the perfection of the mock-heroic." Specially famous passages are the descriptions of the game of ombre and of Belinda's toilet, where the unnumbered treasures of the world are gathered to deck the goddess:—

Rape of the Lock, 1712

This casket India's glowing gems unlocks,
And all Arabia breathes from yonder box.
The Tortoise here and Elephant unite,
Transformed to combs, the speckled, and the white.
Here files of pins extend their shining rows,
Puffs, Powders, Patches, Bibles, Billet-doux.

Pope knew perfectly the temper of his age and profited by it in his translation of Homer, for which he received £9,000, a larger sum than had ever before been received for any literary work. Ten years were given to the task. It was an audacious undertaking, for Pope was not a scholar, read Greek only stumblingly, and was obliged to work largely from translations in Latin, English, and French. Critical opinion has generally agreed with Bentley's judgment: "A pretty poem, Mr. Pope, but you must not call it Homer." The natural simplicity and robust strength of Homer were alien to Pope's art; besides, to be natural like Homer was to run the risk of being "low" and "vulgar," according to Augustan taste. For instance, Pope balked at Teucer's epithet "dog" for Hector, apologizing in a note: "This is literal from the Greek, and I have ventured it." Homer's heroes are made to address each other with the formal splendor of a Bolingbroke. In short, Pope constructed a Queen Anne Homer to suit the notions of his readers, "a deliberate elevation of the bard by high-heeled shoes and a full-bottomed wig," decorating his homely narrative with elegant epigrams, showy antitheses, and moral precepts that would have sadly puzzled the primitive Homeric mind. The vogue of this work was enormous. "It tuned the English tongue," declared Dr. Johnson. For nearly a century its artificial rhetoric was the accepted standard of poetic style. And probably half the English world still gets its knowledge of Homer through Pope.

Translation of Homer, 1715–1725

Satire was congenial to Pope's nature, and in some respects his most characteristic work is *The Dunciad*, i. e., the Iliad of the Dunces, a satire of more than seventeen hundred rhymed verses, modeled on Dryden's *MacFlecknoe*. This poem is the

culmination of personal satire. Here Pope dealt out to his enemies spite and venom on a grand scale. Lewis Theobald had proved himself a better editor of Shakespeare than Pope, and for this offense was made the hero of the poem; fifteen years later, by a rewriting of the poem, this honor was conferred on another choice enemy, Colley Cibber. All poetasters and witlings, as subjects of the prince of dullness, were lashed with couplets that "rang like the crack of a whip." Pope's sting was sharper than Swift's or Dryden's. With Professor Beers we must agree that it is "impossible to withhold admiration for the wit, the wickedness, the triumphant mischief of the thing"; at the same time we must deplore Pope's vast expenditure of poetic energy on such a subject—a Hercules engaged in exterminating rats and mice. His most worthy work in this form of personal satire is in the *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*, which contains the malevolent picture of Addison.

The Dunciad, 1728

Pope's latest poetry is almost exclusively ethical. Leaving "Fancy's maze," he says, he "stooped to truth and moralized his song." His reputation as a moralist rests mainly on the celebrated *Essay on Man*, which embodies the skeptical tendencies of the thought of the period. Its rather shallow philosophy was borrowed from Bolingbroke, his adored "guide, philosopher, and friend." The theme is "to vindicate the ways of God to man," to solve the problems of the universe through reason and common sense. The reasoning is confused and contradictory; the psychology is pale and thin compared with that of Browning, for example; and the moralizing is often mere commonplace reflections. But the poem has many fine passages, and abounds in close-packed, aphoristic lines and phrases, like the optimistic "whatever is is right," the familiar "order is Heaven's first law," and the ungrammatical—

Essay on Man, 1732

> Man never is, but always to be blessed.

"He is our greatest master in didactic poetry," says Brooke, "not so much because of the worth of the thoughts as because of the masterly form in which they are put."

The dominating influence of Pope in English poetry now seems almost unaccountable. Not only in England, but from Sweden to Italy his poems were studied, translated, and imitated. Next to Shakespeare, he has made the largest contribution to our common stock of quotations. His progress from the first was a triumphal march, and each great poem served to fix upon English poetry more definitely and irrevocably the stamp of false classicism. His inheritance from Dryden was increased manyfold. The theories introduced at the Restoration as fashions or vague reform impulses, he established as principles. His intellectual brilliancy, his passion for perfection of technique, particularly his marvelous mastery of the couplet, fascinated other poets, and he became their model and unquestioned authority. And his poetry still exercises its charm. We admire it, although we cannot love it; it is only half human, at the most, all head and no heart. "Pope's gifts," says Birrell, "were his wit, his swift-working mind, added to all the cunning of the craft and mystery of composition. He could say things better than other men and hence it comes that, be he a great poet or a small one, he is a great writer, an English classic."

The Influence of Pope

The Lesser Augustan Wits

The minor poets of this period usually figure in literary history as the enemies or the friends of Pope, and the interest of this relationship often obscures their poetic claims. Several of them wrote original and excellent poetry that does not deserve the neglect into which it has generally fallen. Thomas Parnell, an Irishman, friend of Swift and Pope, and member of the "Scriblerus Club" from which the *Dunciad* emanated, produced in his

Thomas Parnell, 1679 1718

Hermit a model of moralized song. For refined expression and perfect balance of action and reflection, this poem fully meets the exacting requirements of French classical taste. His fond study of Milton is reflected in the *Night-Piece on Death* and the *Hymn to Contentment*. In the melody of his verse he was superior to Pope.

Matthew Prior wrote songs, ballads, satires, epigrams, and *vers de société* with a light-hearted gaiety and graceful touch that made him exceedingly popular. He renounced the authority of the couplet in his frolicsome poems, and used a variety of meters, especially the anapestic measure. Readers are no longer "bewitched," like Cowper, with the classicized version of the *Nut-Brown Maid* in his *Henry and Emma*, although the simple pathos of the old ballad is not entirely evaporated in the shining paraphrase. "As an epigrammatist he is unrivaled in English," says Dobson. His poems would not now be complimented, as they were by his friends, by publication in a sumptuous folio three feet tall, but a little of his "wax-flower prettiness" is still delightful and should not be missed.

Matthew Prior, 1664–1721

The artless *Pastorals* of Ambrose Philips afforded Pope malicious sport, but Philips did not deserve the immortal epithet "Namby-Pamby" put upon him by Henry Carey (author of the charming *Sally in our Alley*) in ridicule of his simple odes to children. These were, indeed, a new species, written in short trochaic lines, and marking a worthy departure from the starched propriety of the prevailing style. In 1723 Philips brought out a *Collection of Old Ballads*, a fact to be noted in connection with the approaching revival of the old music.

Ambrose Philips, 1675–1749

Thomas Tickell, 1686–1740. Lady Winchilsea, 1660?–1720

The permanent distinction of Thomas Tickell is that he supplanted Steele in the affections of Addison and expressed the sorrow of a nation in the elegy, *To the Earl of Warwick, on the Death of Mr. Addison*.

In this tender, dignified, and beautiful tribute, a noble grief aroused a mediocre poet to the production of a masterpiece. A genuine feeling for nature surprises us in the poems of Lady Winchilsea, "a wood lark among the town sparrows," whose lines *To the Nightingale* and *A Nocturnal Reverie* are more worthily appreciated to-day than in their own age.

Almost the only friend with whom Pope did not quarrel was the happy, indolent John Gay, the spoiled child of Anne's family of poets, who idled away his life basking in the sunshine of great folks' friendship and patronage. Spurred to the mischief by Pope, he wrote the *Shepherd's Week*, designed to ridicule the sham rusticity of Philips's *Pastorals*, but the truth and humor of his rustic pictures attracted more attention than the satire. The *Beggar's Opera*, written at Twickenham with Pope and Swift, was the first real English opera, and created a great sensation with its clever satire and tuneful songs, eclipsing for a season the glories of the Italian opera. It was said to have "made Gay rich and Rich [the manager] gay." The popularity of his *Fables*, for which he is sometimes called the English La Fontaine, lasted a hundred years. All will agree with Thackeray that Gay's elaborate trifles "any man who loves lazy literature will find delightful." But if all these be forgotten, the ballad of *Black-eyed Susan* will forever keep his memory green.

John Gay, 1685–1732

Beggar's Opera, 1728

PROGRAM OF WORK

CLASS READING. SWIFT: *Gulliver's Travels:*—Voyage to Lilliput; Voyage to Brobdingnag, ch. i; *The Tale of a Tub*, secs. 2, 4, 6, 11 (Century); *Meditation upon a Broomstick.*

ADDISON: *The Spectator*:—Sir Roger de Coverley papers, nos. 106, 108, 110, 112, 115, 117, 122, 125, 130, 269, 329, 335, 383, 517; 26, Thoughts in Westminster Abbey; 5, On the Opera; 13, Stage Lions; 81, Party Patches; 102, The Fan Exercise; 275, A Beau's Head; 281, A Coquette's Heart; 245, A Lady's Library; 35, True and False Humor; 58, True and False Wit; 409, On Taste; 207, On

Prayer; 119, Country Manners; 251, London Cries; 74, Ballad of Chevy Chase; 159, Vision of Mirzah; 584–585, Hilpa and Shalum. *Poems:*—Selections in Manly.

STEELE: *The Tatler:*—no. 1, The Advertisement; 181, A Recollection; nos. 82, 95, 167, 264 (Manly); *The Spectator:*—no. 2, The Club; 11, Inkle and Yarico; 454, A Day in London; Sir Roger de Coverley papers, 6, 107, 113, 118.

DEFOE: *Robinson Crusoe; The London Plague* (Garnett); *The Shortest Way with Dissenters* (Century); Selection from *Captain Singleton* (Manly).

POPE: *The Rape of the Lock; Essay on Criticism*, ll. 289–423, 610–642; *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*, or selections, 125–192, 193–214 (Addison), 334–367, 406–419; *Essay on Man*, 77–171; *The Universal Prayer; The Iliad*, bk. VI, 462–637 (Hector and Andromache).

PARNELL: *The Hermit; A Night-Piece on Death; A Hymn to Contentment.* Prior: *To a Child of Quality; An Ode; Cupid Mistaken; A Better Answer; A Simile.* Philips: *To Miss Charlotte Pulteney, in her Mother's Arms; Ode to Miss Carteret.* Tickell: *To the Earl of Warwick, on the Death of Mr. Addison.* Winchilsea: *To the Nightingale; A Nocturnal Reverie.* Gay: *The Hare with Many Friends;* From the *Shepherd's Week; Black-eyed Susan.*

These poems will be found in Ward, Manly, Bronson, and Century.

BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM. Dennis's *Age of Pope*, vol. II, ch. xii; Gosse's *Eighteenth Century;* Stephen's *English Thought in the Eighteenth Century;* Mair's *Modern English Literature*, ch. v; Cambridge, vol. IX, ch. i (Defoe), ch. ii (Steele and Addison), ch. iii (Pope), ch. iv (Swift), ch. vi (Lesser Verse Writers); Johnson's *Lives of the Poets.*

Stephen's *Swift* (E. M. L.); Collins's *Swift;* Birrell's *Men, Women and Books;* Ainger's *Lectures and Essays;* Dobson's *Eighteenth Century Vignettes;* Taine, bk. III, ch. v.

Courthope's *Addison* (E. M. L.); Green's *Selections* (G. T. S.); Arnold's *Selections* (Cl. Press); Morley's *Edition of the Spectator* (Original Text); Taine, bk. III, ch. iv; Macaulay's *Essay on Addison;* Dobson's *Steele* (E. W.); Aitken's *Steele;* Thackeray's *English Humorists;* Dobson's *Selections* (Cl. Press); Dennis's *Studies in English Literature* (Steele, Pope, Defoe); Forster's *Biographical Essays.*

Minto's *Defoe* (E. M. L.); Stephen's *Hours in a Library*, vol. I; Raleigh's *The English Novel;* Cross's *Development of the English Novel;* Simonds's *Introduction to the Study of English Fiction.*

Stephen's *Pope* (E. M. L.); Ward's Globe Edition; Lowell's *Essay on Pope;* Courthope, vol. v, ch. vi; Stephen's *Hours in a Library*, vol. I; De Quincey's *Essay on Pope;* Hazlitt's *English Poets;* Birrell's *Obiter Dicta*, Second Series; Sainte Beuve's *Eng-*

lish Portraits; Warton's *Essay on Pope* (1756); Spence's *Anecdotes.*

Dobson's *Eighteenth Century Vignettes* (Prior) and *Miscellanies* (Gay); Ward's *Poets* (Parnell, Prior, Tickell, Gay).

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND. McCarthy's *Reign of Queen Anne;* Morris's *Age of Anne* (*Epochs of History*); Trevelyan's *England under the Stuarts*, ch. xv; Lecky's *History of England in the Eighteenth Century*, vol. I, ch. iv (Tastes and Manners); vol. II, ch. ix (Religious Revival); Ashton's *Social Life in the Reign of Queen Anne;* Sydney's *England and the English in the Eighteenth Century;* Taine, bk. III, ch. iii; Macaulay's *History of England*, vol. I, ch. III; Thackeray's *Henry Esmond.*

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION AND RESEARCH

1. Account for the predominance of satire in this period. 2. Distinction between "Gothic" and "classic" as understood at this time. 3. What principles were represented by the party names, Whig and Tory (Macaulay, vol. I, ch. i)? 4. The portrait of a beau; of a lady of quality. (*Spectator*, Ashton, Sydney). 5. Story of the South Sea Bubble (Encycl. Brit.). 6. Clubs and Coffee Houses (Ashton, Sydney). 7. Character of the clergy as represented by Swift and Addison.

8. Interpret Swift's general purpose in *Gulliver's Travels.* 9. Explain the satire in the account of the Big-endians; in the description of the Academy of Lagado. 10. Study carefully Swift's style and explain the sources of its power. 11. Do the *Verses on the Death of Dr. Swift* fairly represent his character?

12. Difference between the characters of Addison and Steele. 13. Purpose of the *Spectator* (nos. 10, 34, 58). 14. Distinguish sharply between the method of Addison's satire and Swift's, and Pope's. 15. Show how the Sir Roger de Coverley papers might be developed into a novel.

16. A comparison of Defoe with Robert Louis Stevenson. 17. Discuss the relation of journalism to fiction. 18. Explain Defoe's methods of making fiction appear like fact.

19. Make a study of Pope's couplet, its merits and demerits. Compare it with Browning's, in *My Last Duchess.* 20. Discuss Leslie Stephen's judgment: "Pope never crosses the indefinable, but yet ineffaceable line, which separates true poetry from rhetoric." 21. Compare Pope's *Iliad* with Bryant's translation; for example, bk. VI, 462–637. 22. Make a collection of the familiar quotations from the *Essay on Criticism;* from the *Essay on Man.*

CHAPTER XIV

THE AGE OF JOHNSON

1744–1784

The forty years immediately following the age of Anne constituted a period of reaction and regeneration. Just when the classical authority of Pope and Addison seemed well established, a restless discontent appeared among authors, breaking out finally in open defiance. Literature, seeking instinctively the freedom necessary to its healthful life, discarded the uniform themes and style of the classicists, and responded to new impulses and more human interests. The change was promoted by several forces. Wealth and the comforts of life were increased, affording a larger leisure for thought and culture. Good roads were built and a coaching service was established, by which books and newspapers were extensively circulated. Intellectual life, which had extended not far beyond the coteries of the London coffee-houses, was now carried throughout the country, and literary interest became national.

Character of the Period

Three literary movements are to be studied in this period: the rise of the modern novel, the culmination of classicism in Johnson and Burke, and the revival of romanticism. The novelists restored to literature the human heart, which had been submerged in the intellectualism of the two preceding periods; the romanticists brought back nature and the spiritual instincts of man.

The novel has become the predominating type in modern

literature, as the drama was in Elizabethan literature. In the period over which Dr. Johnson presided, the drama was in the last stages of decline, and unsuitable for supplying longer the literary entertainment demanded by an enlarged reading public. But the drama is closely akin to the novel, and many of its features were appropriated by the novelists. As we have seen, two kinds of story-telling had come down from the Middle Ages: the romance for the nobility, and the realistic and burlesque tale for the common people. The latter type was especially popular in Italy and was called *novella*, from which the English name "novel" is derived. In Spain a similar species, suggested by the contrast between the ideal life of the romances and actual life, was the picaresque romance, the hero of which is a *picaro*, or rogue, who wanders about seeking, not, like a knight errant, opportunities for noble deeds, but all sorts of roguish adventures for his own mischievous pleasure. Of this species Defoe and Smollett furnished examples.

Origin of the Modern Novel. Italian and Spanish Romances

The monstrous romances of the *Grand Cyrus* school, imported from France in the seventeenth century, did not long endure before the critical humor and clear sense of the eighteenth century; although a lingering appetite for them is found as late as 1752, giving occasion for Mrs. Lenox's *Female Quixote*, which satirizes sentimental young ladies who insisted upon finding in every-day life the deportment and language of "Ibrahim, the illustrious Pasha." Such vitality as these romances once possessed was exhausted when the real novel appeared.

French Romances

The novel grew not so much from earlier models and experiments as from immediate literary and social conditions. Its essential elements are found in Defoe, Swift, Steele, and Addison. The lively sketches of manners and morals in the *Tatler* and *Spectator* needed only to be organized into an artistic unity to become the novel of manners. In the suggested

narrative of the Sir Roger de Coverley papers, with the idyllic background of country scenes and characters, is a partly developed novel like the *Vicar of Wakefield*. Moreover, the newly awakened scientific spirit produced a demand for the facts of minute observation and analysis. The vivid, matter-of-fact narratives of Bunyan and Defoe were transition forms, to be amplified and enriched by the character painter. The drama suggested to the narrative writers of the day the use of a plot with some centralizing motive or passion. Narration, description, adventure, portrait-drawing, moral analysis, plot, logical interplay of characters,—all these now were combined in prose fiction, picturing with dramatic force the character and manners of real life. This conception of the novel is essentially that of our own time.

The Near Sources of the Novel

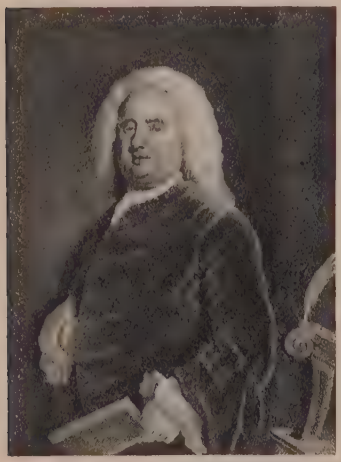
The Novelists

The founder of the modern novel was an author of a new type, neither a scholar nor a fine gentleman, but only a stout, fussy, scrupulous, and pedantic little printer of Salisbury Court,—Samuel Richardson, aged fifty-one when he opened a new literary epoch with *Pamela* in 1740. He was born in Derbyshire in 1689. His father was a joiner, "descended of a family of middling note," he records, and the mother's family was "not ungenteel." His education was limited to "common-school learning," and he was early apprenticed to a London printer. He was thrifty in business, rose to the distinction of Master of the Stationers' Company, and acquired wealth that permitted him a country place at West End, Hammersmith. But a more important apprenticeship was served in the business of catering to the fluttering hearts of sentimental young women.

Samuel Richardson, 1689–1761

"As a bashful and not forward boy," he relates, "I was an

early favorite with all the young women of taste and reading in the neighborhood." The mothers and daughters gathered about him with their sewing to hear him read and discourse. At thirteen he was writing model love-letters for the young ladies to copy, and later became a kind of father confessor to whom women confided the secrets of their hearts and referred nice questions of conduct and conscience. Though a close observer of life, his chief study was feminine character, which he explored with the devoted enthusiasm of a scientist. Inquisitive and gossipy, "his eyes always on the ladies," in the words of his self-drawn portrait, he knew the tea-table better than the tavern; and from the flattery of the feminine worshipers who encircled him at West End he drew his inspiration.



SAMUEL RICHARDSON

Pamela, 1740. Clarissa Harlowe, 1748. Sir Charles Grandison, 1753

A publisher invited Richardson to prepare "a little volume of letters, in a common style, on such subjects as might be of use to those country readers who were unable to indite for themselves." It occurred to him that the letters would be more instructive if they were made to tell a connected story and point a moral. So the Complete Letter-Writer was expanded into the complete novel *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded*. The story is of a maid of low degree, who by steadfast rectitude repels the indignities of her aristocratic master and wins him for a husband. The moral lesson

is not a lofty one, but it suited the times, and the book was an astonishing success. It was soon followed by Richardson's masterpiece, *Clarissa Harlowe*, in which the noble-minded heroine is persecuted by her parents and then by a refined villain, Lovelace, until death releases her from intolerable sufferings. Through eight volumes this story is prolonged, describing every heart-throb of the heroine with miscroscopic delicacy and cumulative agony to the tragic end.

Having presented two ideal women, Richardson next essayed an ideal man in *Sir Charles Grandison*. The wealthy, benevolent, and fascinating Sir Charles, the embodiment of all desirable accomplishments and virtues, is too perfect to be convincing; his love-affairs are carried on with a painful propriety, and even his religion is a part of his etiquette. But we are assured by a contemporary critic that "all the recesses of the human heart are explored, and its whole texture unfolded."

In this trilogy Richardson represents humble life, middle-class life, and high life. The pictures are effective in proportion to his experience. Women he fully comprehended; men he only apprehended. His method is that of Dutch painting, intensity being obtained by infinitely patient and minute detail; but tediousness results from a too uniform application of the method. Nearly a volume is required to describe Sir Charles's wedding. Moreover, he is sadly deficient in humor. The awkward epistolary form of narrative is used with much skill in all three novels, possibly with the shrewd perception that the letter with its privileged "P. S." is the fittest instrument for a woman's self-revelation. The moral purpose, announced on the title-page of *Pamela*, "to cultivate the principles of religion and virtue," is always in evidence. Dr. Johnson was right: "He taught the passions to move at the command of virtue." But only the lower passions; of the passions that exalt the soul Richardson was ignorant. His moral system rested content in a com-

Richardson's Characteristics

fortable sense of respectability, and did not extend beyond the principles discussed over a cup of chocolate.

Sentiment was his true forte, evolved and expressed with a feminine fluency and delicacy of discrimination. He restored the natural emotions to literature and opened the flood-gates of the stream of sentimentalism that swept through England, France, and Germany. The hardest natures were melted by Clarissa's tears. "I heartily despise him," said the insensitive Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, "and eagerly read him, nay, sob over his works in a most scandalous manner." Pious admirers called him a "divine man"; the poet Young hailed him as "an instrument of Providence"; and the great Diderot, representing literary France, ranked him with Moses, Homer, Euripides, and Sophocles.

Sentimentalism

The robust and virile Fielding is a strong contrast to the shy, nervous, and effeminate Richardson. He was of a family once titled, was educated at Eton, studied law at Leyden, and became a barrister, journalist, and playwright, meanwhile acquiring a broad knowledge of humanity from sources that would have scandalized Richardson. A natural gift of satire was exercised in popular comedies and farces, his shafts being aimed even at the great Walpole. The impulse needed to bring out his full creative powers was afforded by Richardson's *Pamela*.

Henry Fielding, 1707–1754

To Fielding's lusty and worldly mind *Pamela* was only a piece of mawkish sentimentality, and he intended to ridicule it by a parody in *Joseph Andrews;* but with the entrance of Parson Adams and Mrs. Slipslop the burlesque feature fell away and it developed into a story of adventure of a type entirely new to English literature. "A comic epic in prose," it is called on the title-page, and it is avowedly written in imitation of *Don Quixote*. The book still lives for the sake of Parson Adams, a character compounded of the most delightful eccentricities of

Joseph Andrews, 1742.

Jonathan Wild, 1743

benevolence, pedantry, and simplicity, whom Scott regarded as "one of the richest productions of the muse of fiction." This novel was followed by *Jonathan Wild*, a remarkable piece of grim, analytical irony, written to illustrate the theme that ideals of greatness, divested of the quality of goodness, are about the same in the thief as in the "noble lord," that "the splendid palaces of the great are often no other than Newgate with the mask on."

Fielding's masterpiece is *Tom Jones*, the most celebrated of the eighteenth-century novels, and one of the most famous books, proverbially speaking, in English literature. The hero is a foundling, in the family of Mr. Allworthy, and through the influence of a jealous nephew, Blifil, is turned into the world to shift for himself. He goes up to London, and encounters by the way many extraordinary adventures, in which both his manners and his morals are much bedraggled in the dirt. Finally the secret of his birth is discovered, Blifil's perfidy is exposed, Tom is restored to the favor of Mr. Allworthy, marries Sophia, the beautiful daughter of Squire Western, and enjoys a happiness quite disproportionate to his deserts. A well-rounded plot here appears for the first time in English fiction. The coarse realism of the story is much too acrid for modern relish. Tom Jones is the exuberant, red-faced, beefy young John Bull, disporting himself in happy contempt of all ordinary rules of propriety. The author's unvarnished candor was discomforting even to readers of his own day. "But what a brave wit it is," exclaims Dobson, "what a wisdom, after all, that is contained in this wonderful novel! Where shall we find its equal for richness of reflection, for inexhaustible good-humor, for large and liberal humanity!"

History of Tom Jones, 1749

Fielding's last novel, *Amelia*, was written in a more subdued tone, with evident philanthropic feeling. It contains the author's experience and judgment about the corrupt courts, abuses of the prisons, and brutalizing effects of the punish-

ments for crime, and it foreshadows the humanitarianism of Dickens. Its chief interest, however, is the tender, womanly character of Amelia, one of the choice figures of English fiction. Fielding's last book, the *Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon*, written during a hopeless voyage in search of health, is a touching record of the last reflections of a manly and indomitable mind laboring with physical pain. Two months after landing in Lisbon he died.

Amelia, 1751

Like Richardson, Fielding was a moralist, but after a different fashion. Even in *Tom Jones* he professed "a sincere endeavor to recommend goodness and innocence." He hated hypocrisy, and loved to strip off the masks of formal righteousness and expose the meanness beneath the goodly outside show. Where Richardson judges deeds, Fielding judges motives. The apology for his heroes is "goodness of heart," which he exalts as a sort of special virtue that expiates a multitude of sins. He persistently illustrates the contrast between the errors of a generous, warm-blooded heart and the hard-starched propriety of a cold, calculating heart. He paints unrestrained, elemental human nature, but is not unmindful of the balance in favor of good conduct over bad. Richardson's characters live in an indoor world, in an atmosphere of steaming chocolate and jasmine flowers; Fielding's characters live a burly, breezy out-of-door life—healthy men and women, with the smell of beer and cheese about them. And most unlike Richardson, his broad, irrepressible, unblushing humor sheds its beneficent influence like rain upon the just and the unjust.

Contrast between Fielding and Richardson

Tobias Smollett was a Scotchman who had been educated as a physician. Disappointed in his first literary attempts with satire and drama, he enlisted in the navy and served five years as surgeon's mate. The successes of Richardson and Fielding suggested a profitable use for the varied material of his rough experience. In 1748 *Roderick Random* appeared, a novel of adventure of

Tobias Smollett, 1721–1771

the picaresque type, a loosely constructed panorama of scenes without a plot, full of stiff sea-breeze vitality and boisterous sport, with an astonishing display of nautical knowledge. Of a similar character is *Peregrine Pickle*, written with a ferocious zest for wild and brutal adventure, and satirizing with a savage glee people whom the author disliked.

Smollett, like Fielding, imitated *Don Quixote*, but with none of Fielding's generous raillery and sympathetic humor. In these stories he founded the salt-water school of fiction, and in his method of dwelling upon some grotesque feature or eccentricity of a character he furnished patterns for Dickens. His naturalism is always excessive, "such a bustle of coarse life, such swearing and rioting and squalor, and, above all, such incessant thumping and fighting and breaking each other's heads and kicking each other's shins as could never have taken place in any conceivable community." His best novel, *Humphrey Clinker*, is milder in its humor and more truthful in its pictures of life. The description of the experiences of an English family while traveling in Scotland and England produces continuous laughter. The barbarism of the two preceding novels is here tamed into a civilized entertainment that may still be enjoyed.

Coarseness of these Novels

Humphrey Clinker, 1771

Unique qualities were added to the developing novel by Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* and *Sentimental Journey*, which were enlivened with sunny humor and in which a quiet, stationary plot of haphazard meditation was contrasted with the clattering activity of Fielding and Smollett. Sterne was a fox-hunting parson in Yorkshire, where for some twenty years, he says, "books, fiddling, painting, and shooting were my chief amusements." His "easy-going" father was an impecunious captain, the original of the delightful Uncle Toby. Sterne read extensively, especially in books not generally commended by

Laurence Sterne, 1713–1768

clergymen, and was devoted to "dear Rabelais and dearer Cervantes." *Tristram Shandy*, autobiographic in substance and a novel without a story, is, like its author, an embodiment of whim. It is called the "Life and Adventures" of the hero, who tells his own story and little more than succeeds in getting himself born at the end of the third volume.

Tristram Shandy, 1759

Sterne is chiefly famous for his sentimentalism, which appears to have been a natural product of his nervous and emotional temperament; it was also in harmony with the prevailing tendency in fashionable society toward sentimentality. He was the first to use the term "sentimental," as applied to this lachrymose literature. With him the quality is an inimitable blending of humor and pathos, a continuous surprise and interchange of laughter and tears. His humor at its best is subtle and pervasive like an agreeable perfume, and expressed in prose that is as dainty and exquisite as poetry; and his pathos at its worst is mawkish and insipid. There had been no tenderness in literature before like that of Uncle Toby, who "had scarce the heart to retaliate upon a fly." One day a huge buzzing fly had "tormented him cruelly all dinner-time, which after infinite attempts he had caught at last." Carrying it to the window, he cried: "Go, poor devil, get thee gone; why should I hurt thee? This world surely is wide enough to hold both thee and me." Sterne's pity and tenderness are always open to suspicion. The more seriously he reflects upon life, the more ludicrous it appears to him. He weeps that he may enjoy the pleasurable experience of laughing away the tears. But the very absurdity of this sentimentalizing makes it interesting. The influence of his grotesque genius upon literature was widespread. With Richardson, Sterne shared equally the adulation of literary Europe.

Sterne's Sentimentalism

A remark of Goldsmith's, that "the works of antiquity are ever praised, those of the moderns read," applies to these

famous novels. They are largely objects of "reverential neglect." Clarissa Harlowe, Sir Charles Grandison, Parson Adams, Amelia Booth, and Uncle Toby are among the great English characters born of the imagination, but their greatness is accepted on trust. The thousands of new novels, clamorous for attention, preclude the old ones. And there are other obstacles. The tedious prolixity of Richardson, the brutal coarseness of Fielding and Smollett, and the flagrant indecency of Sterne prevent any general enjoyment or knowledge of these remarkable novels, with which, however, the educated person must have some acquaintance.

Present Regard for these Novels

The new species of entertainment was rapidly multiplied in imitations and variations of every phase of the work of these four pioneers. Johnson's ethical tale, *Rasselas*, was an offshoot from Richardson's sermonized narratives. The sentimentality of Sterne reached its climax in Henry Mackenzie's *Man of Feeling*, whose hero weeps five or six times a day and dies from the shock of the acceptance of his love by the mild-eyed heroine. The several elements of the novel as already established—humorous adventure, satire, moral purpose, the sentimental young lady, the polished villain, the kindly old gentleman, the eccentric character—were all refined and purified with a new art and grace in Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield*, the one novel of the century that has lost none of its charm with the passing of the years.

Progress of the Novel through the Century

The element of social satire was specialized in Frances Burney's *Evelina*, which was one of the great literary triumphs of the century. The social world, hitherto described only by men, was here presented from a woman's point of view, with a woman's particularity of observation and delicacy of distinctions in behavior. Fresh fields and new humors were added to the society novel by Maria Edgeworth in *The Absentee* and *Castle Rackrent*. The same humor and vivid realism with which Irish life is pictured in these novels somewhat obscure

the author's philanthropic purpose of improving the condition of the Irish peasantry. With the hospitable Sir Patrick, who "had his house, from one year's end to another, as full of company as ever it could hold, and fuller," the real Irishman entered literature. The greatest of this feminine school was Jane Austen, in her art related most directly to Miss Burney. Her wonderful series of novels, beginning with *Sense and Sensibility*, 1811, represents the perfection of certain strains of eighteenth-century fiction, but belongs more properly with the early fiction of the next century.

Frances Burney, 1752 1840. Maria Edgeworth, 1767 1849. Jane Austen, 1775–1817

The sentimental novel, on its didactic side, expanded into the novel of purpose, cultivated especially by a group of radical thinkers and propagandists of the doctrines of Rousseau and the French Revolution, represented by Elizabeth Inchbald's *Nature and Art* and William Godwin's *Caleb Williams*. Richardson and Fielding held the imagination to real life. With greater freedom Smollett, in his wild tales of adventure, carried the novel toward romance. The romantic type was fully developed in the school of Mrs. Radcliffe, and brought to perfection in the historical romances of Walter Scott. With the close of the century, practically all the elements of fiction had appeared that were developed by the great novelists of the nineteenth century.

Novels of Purpose and Reaction

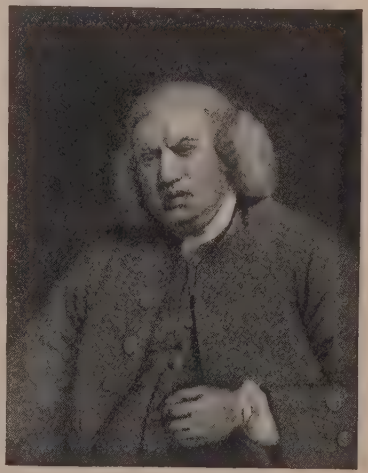
Samuel Johnson

1709–1784

The prominence of Dr. Johnson in literary history is singularly out of proportion to his actual contribution to literature. His fame lives not by what he wrote so much as by what was written about him; his books are little known and less read, but his personality is made vividly familiar by the best biog-

raphy in the English language. He was an acknowledged dictator in the realm of letters, a monarch without a successor on the throne which had been occupied by Ben Jonson, Dryden, and Pope. This supremacy was due to the completeness with which his genius was identified with the genius of the age. "The gradual tendency of the century had more and more come to be concentrated upon attention to common sense, and in Johnson a character was developed, of noble intelligence, of true and tender heart, of lambent humor, in whose entire philosophy every impulse was subordinated to that negative virtue. Johnson became, therefore, the leading intellect of the country, because displaying in its quintessence the quality most characteristic of the majority of educated men and women."

Johnson's Position



SAMUEL JOHNSON

Johnson was born in Lichfield in 1709, the son of a bookseller, in whose shop a large part of his education was acquired. At school a good amount of Latin was "whipped into him," a method of instruction which he commended, for a child who is flogged "gets his task, and there's an end on't." At Pembroke College, Oxford, he spent only about a year, being left by his father's death with an inheritance of barely £20. For six years he managed to live by school-teaching. Meanwhile at the age of twenty-six he married a widow of forty-eight, described by his friends as an

Youth and Education

"antiquated beauty" who affected society airs. In 1737, with three acts of a tragedy in his pocket, he went up to London to seek his fortune by literature, accompanied by his townsman and pupil, David Garrick. The next ten years were spent in a struggle with poverty among the threadbare scribblers of Grub Street. Few details of this period are known. Once long after, it is said, Johnson burst into tears on recalling his experiences. With the vagabond poet Savage he walked the streets at night, unable to pay for a lodging. A letter to an employer he signed "impransus," and, resolute though dinnerless, he kept up the fight for fame. He wrote parliamentary reports for the *Gentleman's Magazine*, made translations, indexes, anything worth a few shillings, and lived meanwhile upon fivepence a day, visiting friends and patrons on "clean-shirt day," and proving by bitter trial his own words—

Life in London

> Slow rises worth by poverty depressed.

This was the essential theme of his first publication of any importance, *London*, a satire suggested by Pope's echoes of Horace, an imitative and only half-sincere denunciation of the city of which in after years he declared that "a man who is tired of London is tired of life." Ten years later appeared another satire, *The Vanity of Human Wishes*, composed in a tone of dignified melancholy, and expressing the poet's constitutional disposition, as well as his convictions about life. In 1747 he began the great *Dictionary of the English Language*, to which he gave seven years of unremitting labor. The work was published in 1755, and for a hundred years remained the standard of English usage. Fame now came to Johnson, "the great Cham of Literature," as Smollett called him. One incident connected with the *Dictionary* is memorable, Johnson's letter of righteous indignation addressed to Lord Chesterfield, who had tardily indicated his willingness to be the patron of the work. Three

Satires, 1738 and 1749. The Dictionary, 1755

sentences will give the quality of this, the most famous letter, probably, ever written by an English author, which brought to an end the vicious system of literary patronage:—

> Is not a patron, my Lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and when he has reached the ground encumbers him with help? The notice which you have been pleased to take of my labors, had it been early, had been kind; but it has been delayed till I am indifferent, and cannot enjoy it; till I am solitary, and cannot impart it; till I am known, and do not want it. I hope it is no very cynical asperity not to confess obligations where no benefit has been received, or to be unwilling that the public should consider me as owing that to a patron which Providence has enabled me to do for myself.

Johnson was honored by Oxford with a doctor's degree, and upon the accession of George III he received a pension, which relieved him from the necessity of steady toil, by which his indolent nature had always been tormented. He now gave his intellectual energy almost entirely to conversation, in which he delighted, and for which he is chiefly celebrated. In coffee-houses, in drawing-rooms, and in his shabby home in Bolt Court he was courted and lionized. In the famous Literary Club, of which he was the presiding genius, his friends were the celebrities of the age, Reynolds, Garrick, Goldsmith, Burke, Gibbon, and many more. These friendships were the consolation of his last years, lonely and clouded with gloom as the end approached. In 1784 he died and was laid in the great Abbey.

Last Years

Johnson's singularities, so faithfully recorded by Boswell, are a part of the most familiar anecdotage of literature. His figure was huge and ungainly, face disfigured by disease, clothing unkempt—he professed "no passion for clean linen"—his wig scorched in front by reading with face near the candle. His manners were uncouth. Inherited melancholia, mingled with a peculiar tendency to superstition, persecuted him through life; but he was steadfast in his religious faith. His prejudices were violent

Personal Characteristics

and picturesque. An extreme Tory, he hated every "vile Whig," and he hated Scotchmen; indeed, a "good hater," he said, was a man "to his very heart's content." In the *Dictionary* he defined *oats* as "A grain which in England is generally given to horses, but in Scotland supports the people." In argument he was imperious and irascible, crushing his opponent with sledge-hammer logic and lashing him with stinging wit. "I dogmatize and contradict," he says, "and in this conflict of opinions and sentiments I find delight." But in this coarse bulk of intellectual power there was "nothing of the bear but his skin," as Goldsmith said; beneath many repellencies there was a brave, patient manliness, and a sympathetic tenderness that was perpetually flowing out to the poor and suffering. His pockets were kept filled with small change for beggars. A woman whom he found lying in the street late at night he carried to his home on his back. His household was a menagerie of waifs and strays of fortune, living upon his charity. For his tender heart, his wisdom and good sense, his inflexible morality, his fearless independence, his wit and humor—for his large humanity, the greatest men and women revered him as an oracle and loved him as a friend.

Johnson usually needed some stress of necessity to arouse his productive energy. To meet the expenses of his mother's funeral he wrote the didactic romance *Rasselas*, which bears the impress of his characteristic temperament, and was once so popular as to be translated into ten languages. The action of the tale is merely a bright thread upon which to string moral and philosophical reflections; it is a little allegory of human life, the search for happiness that inevitably ends in "vanity of vanities." In 1749 the frigid and passionless tragedy *Irene* was produced, through the friendly zeal of Garrick, but without success.

Rasselas, 1759

In 1750 he began the *Rambler*, in the manner of the *Spectator*, and this was followed in 1758 by the *Idler*. The essays of this type, of which he wrote some three hundred, are solemnly

didactic, heavily packed with melancholy wisdom; they were popular, such writing being peculiarly congenial to the Saxon mind, and gave Johnson his reputation as a moral philosopher. They are written in the ponderous prose since called "Johnsonese," the elements of which are elaborate inverted and balanced sentences with a heavy swinging rhythm, Latinized diction, and the use of the abstract for the concrete. There is a massiveness about this style, a kind of "gigantic dignity," such as Johnson himself attributed to Durham Cathedral. With him a hill is a "protuberance," and an author who rushes into print "makes momentaneous excursions to the press." Here is a sonorous sentence with which *Rambler* No. 2 opens:—

The Rambler, 1750–1752. The Idler, 1758–1760

> That the mind of man is never satisfied with the objects immediately before it, but is always breaking away from the present moment, and losing itself in schemes of future felicity; and that we forget the proper use of the time now in our power, to provide for the enjoyment of that which, perhaps, may never be granted us, has been frequently remarked; and as this practice is a commodious subject of raillery to the gay, and of declamation to the serious, it has been ridiculed with all the pleasantry of wit, and exaggerated with all the amplifications of rhetoric.

Goldsmith reminded Johnson that he could never write a fable because his "little fishes would talk like whales." In conversation or in a letter he used an idiomatic and pithy speech; but when he wrote anything that was to be printed, the dignity of literature seemed to him to demand a peculiar dignity of expression; so his majestic Roman sentences move in solemn procession with elephantine tread.

This polysyllabic splendor was much subdued in the *Lives of the Poets*, which was written at seventy with the mellowing experiences of forty years of literary activity, and is the one prose work of Johnson which is still read with enjoyment and studied with profit. These essays aimed to be biographical and critical, but the biography is often inaccurate and the criticism based on principles no longer accepted. The cogent

summaries of personal traits are always interesting, however, and the prejudices and dogmatic certainties of critical judgment are delightfully stimulating. Johnson's critical vision was very limited. He admitted no poetic beauty or mystery that could not be subjected to rule, as patly as a sum in mathematics. The music of poetry for him was represented solely by the Augustan couplet. His critical test was moral and logical: What does a poem teach? Is it clear and coherent? But there is much excellent literary exposition in these essays, even though Cowley is exalted and Milton's *Lycidas* is pronounced to be "easy, vulgar, and disgusting." Historically also these essays are important, as the final summary of the critical movement that began with the Restoration.

Lives of the Poets, 1779–1781

James Boswell, in his *Life of Johnson*, created a new species of biography, in which the hero is made to paint his own portrait by means of letters, conversations, anecdote, and reminiscence. Hitherto biography had been meager and inexact in its facts, vague in its portraits, and given over largely to immoderate eulogy. By the new method the living man is presented, clothed in his faults and virtues impartially combined. In the pages of Boswell, Dr. Johnson is known as no other English author is known. The reader feels that he might at any moment meet the grand old giant lumbering along Fleet Street toward Bolt Court or the "Cheshire Cheese."

Boswell's Life of Johnson, 1791

Boswell was a Scotchman of some culture, and an extraordinary compound of wise man and fool, endowed with a childlike capacity for hero-worship. For the larger part of twenty years he followed Johnson like a faithful dog, enduring the cuffs of his rebukes and sarcasms unabashed, keeping close to his chair at the tavern or club that he might not miss a word, sticking to him like a "bur," as Goldsmith said, recording in his capacious memory every word and gesture of his hero, and conveying them with scrupulous particularity to his note-book. Through

this idolatrous friendship we are permitted to join Burke, Goldsmith, and Reynolds in those wonderful conversations. We see the burly Johnson rolling and twisting about in awkward attitudes and hear his portentous voice declaiming with emphatic "Sir" this and "Sir" that, until he is "exhausted by violence and vociferation." His thought flows like a flooded mountain stream, his wit flashes like lightning out of the dark solemnity of his being. A drenching in one of those stormy debates is always refreshing. Let us thank Boswell for the wonderful fidelity and copiousness of his record, thank him as Leslie Stephen did, for "the most purely delightful of all books."

Oliver Goldsmith

1728–1774

Of all the members of the Literary Club, the one regarded by Johnson with the tenderest friendship was Oliver Goldsmith, his antithesis in about every quality that constitutes personality and genius. Goldsmith was born in Ireland in 1728. His father was a clergyman, "passing rich with forty pounds a year." The little village of Lissoy, where his childhood was spent, is the idealized "Sweet Auburn" of his memory. His life from the beginning was a kind of happy-go-lucky, vagabond existence, full of hard knocks and humiliations, but containing much happiness withal. He was a dull scholar, always lowest in the lists, and regarded as "a stupid blockhead." Somehow he made his way through Trinity College, aided by a kindly uncle and other friends, including the pawnbroker, and by writing street ballads for a few shillings now and then. At twenty-one he entered the great world, equipped only for mishap and adventure. He offered his services to the church and they were declined, experimented with teaching and the law, and with a renewed draft upon the lenient uncle's bounty went to Edin-

Early Life and Adventures

burgh to study medicine. There he lived, and perhaps studied, for a year and a half, then went to the University of Leyden, and from Leyden with a guinea in his pocket he set out upon a year's tramp through Europe. Of this famous episode almost nothing is known. According to a pretty legend, based on a hint in his poems, he paid his way by entertaining the peasants with his flute. At the university of Padua, probably, he obtained his medical degree. In 1756 he was back in London, friendless and penniless.

Life was now a bitter struggle. He lived in a garret, surrounded by squalor. His small, awkward figure, pock-marked face, shabby clothes, and Irish brogue were poor recommendations.

Life in London

He served in a chemist's shop, was usher in a private school, opened a doctor's office, became a proof-reader in Richardson's printing-house, and turned to literature as a last resort. To Goldsmith's misfortunes, which biographers have lamented probably more than he ever did himself, we owe some of the finest literary products of the century. To be a bookseller's hack was his fate, and he accepted it with merry recklessness. He wrote reviews for the magazines, compiled histories of Rome, Greece, and England, and a *History of Animated Nature*, more animated than scientific. For a bookseller he wrote *The Bee*, a series of weekly essays of the *Spectator* type, and in *The Citizen of the World*, in the guise of a Chinese traveler, he gave humorous and critical pictures of society, politics, and literature that are still delightfully illuminating.

With the publication of his first poem, *The Traveler*, came fame, and fortune waited upon his pen. For his first comedy he received £500, four-fifths of which he at once spent upon

Fortune and Misfortune

sumptuous rooms in the Temple, and the other fifth on grand dinners and fine clothes. He blossomed out in a coat of Tyrian bloom, blue silk breeches, and a new wig, with a smart sword and gold-headed cane. But for all his grand airs he was always "Goldy" among his

friends. During his last years he earned large sums of money, but it was generally spent before it was earned. Gradually he sank in a sea of financial troubles from which his friends could not rescue him. Mental depression ended in nervous fever and at forty-five he died. Burke on hearing the news burst into tears; Reynolds dropped his brush for the day; of his life and fame Johnson spoke the final word for all time: "He raised money and squandered it by every artifice of acquisition and folly of expense. But let not his frailties be remembered; he was a very great man."

OLIVER GOLDSMITH

Goldsmith contributed to all the forms of literature approved by his age, and, in the words of Johnson's epitaph, "he touched nothing that he did not adorn." He wrote the best didactic poem, the best novel, the best comedy of the century, and essays little, if at all, inferior to Addison's best. The one word that his works suggest is charm, a charm that is undiminished by time and change. His calamitous frailties left no stain upon his art. Only the sunshine and sweetness of his character pervade his books. In an age of unreality he was absolutely genuine. The artlessness of his style is one of the finest achievements of art. "No one like Goldsmith," says Dowden, "knew how to be at once natural and exquisite, innocent and wise, a man and still a child."

Character of his Works

His famous poems, *The Traveler*, a moralized commentary on the condition of European society, and the finer *Deserted Village*, are the perfection of didactic poetry in the excellent balance of description and reflection and in a versification delicately harmonized with tender and gracious thought. The vivid descriptions of the village scenes and the loving portraits of the good parson and the schoolmaster, the lingering sweetness of the melody, and the warm-hearted sympathy with humanity, give the *Deserted Village* its universal and irresistible appeal. There are in it touches of delicate sentiment and imagination, totally unknown to the art of Pope, as in the line—

The Traveler, 1764. The Deserted Village, 1770

Sweet as the primrose peeps beneath the thorn.

The ballad of *Edwin and Angelina*, imitating the simple music of the past, was very popular, and the airy lightness of touch in the *Retaliation* is still almost unequaled in humorous verse.

But Goldsmith lives more fully in his prose. The *Vicar of Wakefield* Scott declared to be "one of the most delicious morsels of fictitious composition on which the human mind was ever employed." It is a domestic novel, picturing simple country life with an idyllic charm, a graceful style, and an inimitable humor that afford perennial delight. Goldsmith loved to elaborate the portrait of a favorite character, such as Beau Tibbs and the Man in Black of the essays, and Dr. Primrose is his masterpiece of this kind. The good Vicar is overwhelmed with misfortunes, which always end, however, like summer showers with sunshine and a rainbow. The author's own character is written into the story, in the Vicar's sturdy optimism, in the plot that drifts aimlessly like his own life, even in the blundering Moses who traded the family horse for a gross of green spectacles.

Vicar of Wakefield, 1766

Goldsmith's gentle genius appears in its most frolicsome mood in the comedies, *The Good-Natured Man* and *She Stoops*

to Conquer. The first was written in a spirit of protest against the simpering, sentimental style that had taken possession of the comic stage. But its natural and vigorous humor was not appreciated; some parts were decried as "low" by the fashionable taste, and it won only a qualified success. Five years later, however, the sentimentalists were put to rout by the brilliant success of *She Stoops to Conquer*, which is admittedly one of the great comedies of the world. No play outside of Shakespeare's has been more widely known or more enduringly popular. In its artistic finish and witty, sparkling dialogue, it is surpassed only by Congreve, and its tone, unlike Congreve's, is pure and wholesome.

The Good-Natured Man, 1768. She Stoops to Conquer, 1773

With Goldsmith's comedies are associated the similarly brilliant comedies of Richard Brinsley Sheridan, *The Rivals* and *The School for Scandal*. All four plays appeared within a single decade, 1768–1777, and mark a brief return of comedy to its best estate, a revival of the comedy of incisive wit, brisk action, pure mirth, and natural feeling. It was a hopeful outburst of dramatic genius, but the productive power of the English drama was exhausted, and with a sudden blaze of glory came to its end.

Sheridan's Comedies, 1775 and 1777

The Historians

The eighteenth century contributed not only the essay and the novel, but also history to the modern prose forms of literature. Hitherto historical writing had been for the most part the unscholarly compilation of facts, without accuracy, style, or philosophy. The pioneers of the modern historical methods were Hume, Robertson, and Gibbon, who gave to historical writing breadth and dignity and literary qualities that made it as popular as the novel of the period.

David Hume was already eminent as a philosopher and had

attracted wide attention by his *Essays*, which embodied the skeptical tendency of the age, when, in 1754, he published his famous *History of England*. This work is no longer respected as history, owing to its superficial treatment of sources and its biased judgments, presented with an appearance of philosophy and judicial candor. But Hume's lucidity and elegance of style, and his power of gathering into summaries vast series of events, are qualities that command admiration, though they no longer inspire enthusiasm. He made history interesting, but left to others the duty of making it instructive and authentic. Another Scotchman, William Robertson, influenced by the success of Hume, brought out in 1759 a *History of Scotland*, the first important example of a class of histories represented in America by Irving, Prescott, and Parkman, in which, by skill and grace of narrative, facts are made more interesting than fiction.

David Hume, 1711–1776

William Robertson, 1721–1793

The greatest of this trio of historians is Edward Gibbon, whose magnificent *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* is the earliest English historical work to be written in accord with modern methods of historical research and criticism. The theme was inspired and the continuous labor of fifteen years was sustained by the noblest intellectual enthusiasm. The origin of the work is thus described: "It was at Rome, on the fifteenth of October, 1764, as I sat musing amid the ruins of the Capitol, while the barefooted friars were singing vespers in the temple of Jupiter, that the idea of writing the Decline and Fall of the city first started to my mind."

Edward Gibbon, 1737–1794

The work covers the period from the reign of Trajan, A.D. 98, to the fall of Constantinople in 1453. It is the period of transition from the old to the new world, when ancient civilization with all its grandeur of art, literature, and society was crumbling into ruins, upon which a new civilization was rising. In vastness and sublimity the design was unparalleled, and the execu-

tion was correspondingly grand. The knowledge gathered by Gibbon was encyclopedic in extent and scientific in minuteness and accuracy. The style is singular in its magnificence, rich in color, harmonious and majestic in movement. Its sustained uniformity of elegance becomes tiresome, but when the topic is large enough to endure the weight of rhetoric its nobility is as impressive as the nobility of a Greek temple. "That Gibbon should ever be displaced seems impossible," said his great successor, Freeman; "whatever else is read, Gibbon must be read too."

Decline and Fall, 1776–1788

Edmund Burke

1729–1797

One of the highest points of eminence in the prose movement of the century, in some respects the climax of that movement, was reached by Edmund Burke, whose political orations are a part of English literature as Cicero's orations are a part of Roman literature.

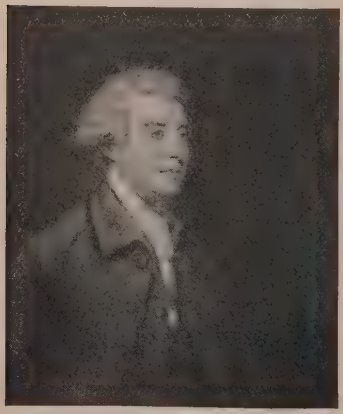
Like Goldsmith, he was an Irishman, endowed with the Celtic temperament and vision. When graduated from Trinity College, he went to London to study law, but was diverted into literature by strong natural tastes. His disappointed father cut off his allowance and he was compelled, like Goldsmith, to drudge at compiling histories and at other hack work. He designed and wrote the first numbers of the *Annual Register*, a yearly chronicle of public events, which still pursues its useful career. His earliest publications indicate wide reading and deep thinking during this period. In 1756 he published *A Vindication of Natural Society*, a satirical parody on Bolingbroke's argument against revealed religion. More important was a treatise on the *Sublime and Beautiful*, with which his reputation as a writer really begins. This was the earliest English contribution to philo-

Early Work in Literature

sophical æsthetics, and exercised an important influence on æsthetic criticism in Germany. The great critic Lessing translated the essay and was inspired by it in writing his own treatise on poetry and painting, the celebrated *Laocoön*.

At thirty-three Burke had not crossed the threshold of his real career. Neither friendships nor favoritism, but recognition of his intellectual worth alone, brought him into the service of the nation. His career is an illustrious example of the "scholar in politics," a statesman made out of books; indeed, it is one of the paradoxes of political history that the greatest practical statesman and political philosopher ever produced by England began his career with a treatise on æsthetics. A first impression of Burke's writings is that of exhaustive knowledge. His mastery of facts was amazing. He never spoke on a subject without first applying to its every detail the most arduous study. "I think I know America," he said; "if I do not, my ignorance is incurable, for I have spared no pains to understand it." To the knowledge of the scholar and thinker were added the passion and the vision of the poet. "What makes Burke stand out so splendidly among politicians," says Matthew Arnold, "is that he treats politics with his thought and imagination."

Scholar and Statesman



EDMUND BURKE

It was a period of great opportunities for political leadership. For many years Burke was the master mind of the Whigs, and when he opposed the party policy toward France the party

quickly went to pieces. Goldsmith undoubtedly expressed a common feeling of Burke's friends, that the questions of the hour were unworthy of his great genius:—

> Who, born for the universe, narrowed his mind,
> And to party gave up what was meant for mankind.

But this was a mistake. The issues were great ones, involving principles of vast import, and Burke dealt with them so profoundly that his works have outlived the occasions from which they sprang and have become a part of the wisdom of the world. His life was devoted to three great themes—England's relations with America, with India, and with France.

England and America

In the struggle with America Burke surpassed all other statesmen in breadth of view and penetrative insight into causes and consequences. He saw the clouds gathering over England from all sides, and, standing alone against the fatuous policy of the crown, he warned his country with prophetic voice against her suicidal course. Study of his works is usually confined to the three discourses on this theme—the speeches on *American Taxation*, *Conciliation with America*, and the *Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol*. Of these three discourses his biographer, Morley, writes: "It is no exaggeration to say that they compose the most perfect manual in our literature, or in any literature, for one who approaches the study of public affairs, whether for knowledge or for practice." The greatest of these, probably the greatest of all his speeches, is the speech on *Conciliation*, "the wisest in its temper, the most closely logical in its reasoning, the amplest in appropriate topics, the most generous and conciliatory in the substance of its appeals."

While England was losing an empire in America she was winning an empire in India. Under the great Lord Clive this vast dwelling-place of an ancient and alien civilization was brought into subjection to the military power and commercial enterprise of England. Warren Hastings became governor of

India, and ruled by methods of corruption, bloodshed, and rapacious greed. In the name of a humanity larger than England had ever conceived, Burke carried in Parliament a motion for the impeachment of Hastings, and himself conducted the trial—one of the greatest events ever witnessed in Westminster Hall. In the opening speech the passion of his eloquence in painting crimes of government oppression was so great that listeners were breathless with horror, women were carried out fainting, and the orator himself was made speechless by his emotion. Fourteen years were given to this cause by Burke. Hastings was finally acquitted, but the lesson of the trial was powerfully impressed upon England and the world, namely, that a subject race has rights that a ruling race must in honor, duty, and morality recognize.

England and India

The policy of England toward France during the great Revolution was dictated by Burke. The celebrated pamphlet, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, stemmed the tide of English sympathy with the revolutionists and was a powerful factor in inducing the nation to engage in the war that ended with the downfall of Napoleon at Waterloo. The extreme conservatism of Burke's thought in this work seems to modern readers almost hostile to true progress, as if his splendid energies were engaged against truth itself. The underlying philosophy of the book has been repudiated, but it is still read not only for its marvelous rhetoric, its lofty emotions, and splendid vehemence of passion, but also for the light it throws upon almost every problem of modern politics and society.

England and France

Like Johnson, Burke was a classicist, but with a more strongly marked individualism. He was classic by education, but romantic by instinct. A poet born into an age of prose and logic, he seemed to aim at elevating prose to a dignity comparable with that of the loftiest poetry, without impairing its strength as an instrument of clear thought. His works are

the culminating product of a prose century, exhibiting its chief intellectual traits,—its practical and logical thinking, its desire for clear-cut truth, reasonableness, and balanced judgment, and its all-pervading sense of artistic form. His oratory is unique in its resplendent rhetoric, flowing in long-swelling periods, sonorous and majestic, overwhelming in its force of copious thought and vivid imagination. His speeches were often listened to with indifference and afterwards read with enthusiasm.

Burke as a Prose Master

His style, too highly wrought even for his own age, became increasingly ornate to the end. With the artist's feeling for rich tones, he robed his thoughts in brocades, colored them with the gorgeous tints of Venetian painting. With Oriental opulence, he wove the gold and precious gems of speech into elaborate metaphors and stately similes. But in spite of excessive ornamentation, Burke's style creates the impression of spontaneity far beyond that of Johnson and the other great classicists. His thought was suffused with emotion; he would bring masses of dull, cold facts to white heat with a flaming passion for justice and humanity, but always under the restraining sense of art. The prose of Gibbon and Burke marks the limit of prose development under classical influence. Its luster is like the antique luster of a Persian rug, which it is neither possible to reproduce nor desirable to imitate.

Splendor of Style

PROGRAM OF WORK

CLASS READING. The Novelists: Selections from Richardson, Fielding, Smollett, and Sterne in Manly, Craik, and Simonds's *Introduction to English Fiction.*

Johnson: *Rambler*, nos. 68, 69 (Manly); *Lives of the Poets*, Dryden, or Addison (Century), or Congreve (Manly); Portions of Preface to Shakespeare (Garnett); *Rasselas* (Cl. Press); Selections from *London* and *Vanity of Human Wishes* (Ward, Manly); Selections from Boswell's *Life of Johnson* (Century, Manly, Craik).

Goldsmith: *The Deserted Village; Retaliation; Vicar of Wakefield;*

She Stoops to Conquer; Citizen of the World, Letters XXI, XXVI–XXX (Manly).

GIBBON: *The Decline and Fall*, ch. xvii (Building of Constantinople); ch. lxviii (Fall of Constantinople). Or selections in Century, or Craik, or Morison's *Life of Gibbon*, 107–115, 148–154.

BURKE: *On Conciliation with America*. Or selections in Craik, Garnett, or Century. Also passages from *Speech on the Nabob of Arcot's Debts* and *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (Manly).

BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM. Seccombe's *Age of Johnson;* Gosse's *Eighteenth Century;* Raleigh's *The English Novel;* Saintsbury's *The English Novel;* Cross's *Development of the English Novel;* Cambridge, vol. x, chs. i, ii, iii (The Novelists), ch. viii (Johnson), ch. ix (Goldsmith), chs. xii, xiii (Hume, Gibbon); Mair's *Modern English Literature*, ch. vi; Thackeray's *English Humorists;* Dobson's *Richardson* (E. M. L.); Stephen's *Hours in a Library* (Richardson, Fielding, Sterne, Johnson); Dobson's *Fielding* (E. M. L.); Hannay's *Smollett* (G. W.); Traill's *Sterne* (E. M. L.); Boswell's *Life of Johnson* (Jones's abridged edition is excellent); Stephen's *Johnson* (E. M. L.); Macaulay's *Essay on Boswell's Johnson;* Hill's *Dr. Johnson: His Friends and His Critics;* Carlyle's *Essays;* Birrell's *Obiter Dicta*, Second Series; Landor's *Imaginary Conversations* (Johnson and Horne Tooke); Irving's *Goldsmith;* Forster's *Goldsmith;* Black's *Goldsmith* (E. M. L.); Macaulay's *Essay on Goldsmith;* Dobson's *Miscellanies;* Oliphant's *Sheridan* (E. M. L.); Morison's *Gibbon* (E. M. L.); Birrell's *Res Judicatæ;* Bagehot's *Literary Studies;* Stephen's *Studies of a Biographer*; Morley's *Burke* (E. M. L.); Dowden's *French Revolution and English Literature;* Stephen's *English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, vol. II, ch. x; Wilson's *Mere Literature;* Birrell's *Obiter Dicta;* Dawson's *Makers of Modern Prose* (Johnson, Goldsmith, Gibbon, Burke).

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION AND RESEARCH

1. Distinguish between the novel and the romance; between the novel and the drama. 2. Enumerate the influences that produced the modern novel. 3. Eighteenth-century sentimentalism, its origin and influence (Stephen's *English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, vol. II, ch. xii, sec. 7; Dobson's *Richardson*, 30–33; Saintsbury's *Essays on French Novelists*, ch. iv). 4. Read extensively in Boswell's *Johnson* and report on such topics as (1) his prejudices, (2) personal eccentricities, (3) benevolence, (4) religion. 5. An account of the Literary Club. 6. Describe "Johnsonese." 7. Discuss Johnson's comment on Addison's style, in respect to his own: "His periods, though not

diligently rounded, are voluble and easy." 8. Which is the best representative of the classic ideals, Addison, Johnson, or Burke?

9. Trace the autobiographic revelations in Goldsmith's works. 10. Compare Goldsmith's poetry with Pope's in respect to thought, feeling, and technique. 11. Account for Walpole's opinion of *She Stoops to Conquer:* "The lowest of all farces. . . . The drift tends to no moral, no edification of any kind. The characters are very low, and aim at low humor." 12. Is Thackeray justified in calling Goldsmith "the most beloved of English writers"?

13. Great historic events included in the period covered by Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.* 14. Faults and merits of Gibbon's style (Morison, 165–168). 15. What are the chief elements of Burke's greatness? 16. Make a careful study of his metaphors. 17. Justify Goldsmith's lines about him:—

> Who, too deep for his hearers, still went on refining,
> And thought of convincing, while they thought of dining.

18. Select examples of vivid imagination; of rhetorical splendor. 19. Burke's chief faults (Compare Lincoln's orations).

CHAPTER XV

THE REVIVAL OF ROMANTICISM

1726–1798

The classical formalism of the eighteenth century was an unnatural restraint upon literature, for the tendency of English genius is toward freedom and individuality. Even early in the century there were signs of a rebellious feeling. A poet now and then timidly resumed his liberty. Passion and imagination gradually returned to poetry and its varied color and music were restored. In the second half of the century the reaction became so general as to be recognized as a distinct movement, which we now describe as the Revival of Romanticism.

The movement assumed various forms. The tendency at first was to break away from the rules in respect to both subject and form. Writers felt an impulse to escape from the close atmosphere of drawing-rooms into the fresh air of the open country; to shake off the conventional trappings of life and art. The poet Shenstone dared to wear his own hair instead of a wig. Nature was rediscovered,—the beauty of landscape, the wild sublimity of mountains, the soft charms of moonlight. Ornamental gardening changed from the artificial to the natural style, with grottoes, miniature cascades, and the "wilderness." Artists, as Walpole said, "leaped the fence and saw that all nature was a garden."

Reaction of the Native Genius

The desire for relief from the wearisome pentameter couplet

led to a study of the neglected poets. Spenser's *Faerie Queene* was discussed and imitated with wide-spread enthusiasm. Milton's minor poems became a prominent and stimulating influence, the gentle melancholy of *Il Penseroso* blending with the sentimental strain of Richardson and Sterne. Blank verse and the octosyllabic couplet were cultivated; the sonnet, unknown since Milton's death, was revived. Interest in the drama, which had lost its creative energy, was sustained by the study of Elizabethan authors. Dodsley's collection of *Old Plays*, in 1744, gave a strong impulse to the romantic reaction. Shakespeare's plays were edited in rival editions, and about 1747 Garrick began to present the plays in the original text, which for nearly a hundred years had been mangled, often beyond recognition, by the "improvements" of the classicists; and in 1769 he organized the Shakespeare Jubilee at Stratford, making Shakespeare both popular and fashionable, to the consternation of the conservatives. Even Goldsmith deplored the tendency to "cry up" the "absurdities of Shakespeare," as an "empty veneration for antiquity."

Revival of Old Authors

This veneration for antiquity grew into an extensive revival of mediævalism, its ideas and institutions, its religion and heroic aspirations, its love of mystery, enchantment, fairies, and goblins. The hermit became a stock character in poetry and fiction. Old black-letter ballads and romances of chivalry were zealously searched for by collectors. The taste for Gothic architecture was restored. The beauty of a cathedral was again comprehended. Horace Walpole built his pseudo-Gothic castle, "Strawberry Hill," which was one of the wonders of the age, and established a school of "Gothic romance" with his *Castle of Otranto*, a wild literary conjuring with ghosts, haunted chambers, subterranean passages, portraits that come to life, and other grotesque inventions to produce thrills and shudders. So large a part of the reactionary movement is occupied by the mediæval

Revival of Mediævalism

element that Professor Beers distinguishes it from other elements and defines romanticism as "the reproduction in modern art or literature of the life and thought of the Middle Ages."

Finally, the classic mythology, which for ages had furnished

STRAWBERRY HILL

the indispensable material of literary invention and decoration, was now brought into competition with a native mythology. In the newly discovered Celtic legendary lore and Norse myths, a mine of fresh poetic material was opened that has ever since enriched literature, music, and the other arts. The Saxon mind was never again to be wholly possessed by the gods of Greece and Rome, and the poets could henceforth—

Discovery of Native Mythology

With British freedom sing the British song.

From an early period the Scotch were generally more alert than the English in discovering the poetry of natural scenery and homely life. In 1725 Allan Ramsay in his *Gentle Shepherd* restored to literature the true spirit of the pastoral, painting faithful pictures of Scotch life, brightened with a happy humor. As

Allan Ramsay, 1686–1758

a people's poet he was the precursor of Burns, who hailed "honest Allan" as one of his masters. We can imagine how the Augustans were astonished, for example, by this picture of a sparkling burn among the birches:—

> Gae farder up the burn to Habbie's How,
> Where a' the sweets o' spring and summer grow:
> Between twa birks, out o'er a little linn
> The water fa's an' mak's a singin' din;
> A pool breast-deep, beneath as clear as glass,
> Kisses, wi' easy whirls, the bordering grass.

In 1726 appeared a "sweetly musing" poem of nature description, *Grongar Hill*, written by John Dyer, a painter-poet who loved "spacious airy downs" and moss-grown ruins, and like Wordsworth felt the "power of hills upon him." Later he flaunted in the faces of the critics of the starched couplet school a long blank-verse poem on the plebeian theme of *The Fleece*, celebrating all the duties of the sheepfold—

John Dyer, 1700?–1758

> Between the lark's note and the nightingale's.

Another nature-loving Scotchman, James Thomson, while Pope was writing the *Dunciad*, was writing *The Seasons*, a poem that in spite of its slender merit has probably led more people into the fields than any other poem in the language. The first part, *Winter*, was published in 1726, when Addison was discoursing on Roman coins. Its blank verse, though absurdly inflated with Miltonic grandeur, was a grateful relief from the interminable click-click of the couplet. The poem now seems cold and mechanical, lacking the intimacy and spiritual sympathy with nature to which we are accustomed, but in its own day it had the force of a revelation. Classical affectations are abundant. None of these early out-of-town poets could go into the fields without a copy of Virgil in his pocket. Thomson

James Thomson, 1700–1748. The Seasons, 1726–1739

describes nature like a Gainsborough painting, but not interpreting, loving best a broad prospect of—

> verdant field and darkening heath between,
> And villages embosomed soft in trees,
> And spiry towns, by surging columns marked
> Of household smoke.

But *The Seasons*, once ranked with *Paradise Lost*, is now neglected or quite forgotten. Not so, however, the *Castle of Indolence*, best evidence of Thomson's inspiration, and finest of the many Spenserian imitations. The delightfully romantic and dreamy atmosphere of the *Faerie Queene* is reproduced, with much of the original charm of melodious verse. It is a poem to be read in summer afternoons beneath murmuring pines:—

Castle of Indolence, 1748

> A pleasing land of drowsy-head it was,
> Of dreams that wave before the half-shut eye;
> And of gay castles in the clouds that pass,
> For ever flushing round a summer-sky:
> There eke the soft delights, that witchingly
> Instil a wanton sweetness through the breast;
> And the calm pleasures always hovered nigh;
> But whate'er smacked of noyance or unrest,
> Was far, far off expelled from this delicious nest.

Another Spenserian imitation was William Shenstone's *Schoolmistress*, inferior to the *Castle of Indolence*, though pronounced by Gray "excellent in its kind and masterly." More than fifty poems "in the manner of Spenser" appeared before the end of the century. Indeed the popularity of Spenser became alarming, and Dr. Johnson, in the *Rambler*, protested vigorously against this romantic foolishness: "Life is surely given us for higher purposes than to gather what our ancestors have thrown away and to learn what is of no value, but because it has been forgotten." But the surly Johnson could never have comprehended the simple law that transcends all his classic principles:

William Shenstone, 1714–1763

"Beauty is its own excuse for being." The most celebrated poem of the Spenserian school is *The Minstrel* of James Beattie, a Scotch poet who, like so many other poets of this period, possessed a kind of parasitic genius, living upon the works of greater poets. His poem is most pleasing when it is reminiscent of Spenser's gliding melody, Thomson's love of landscape, Gray's melancholy, and the old balladry. There is the usual moralizing about the evils of luxury and the beauty of virtue and simplicity, which pleased his age; but Beattie is no longer mistaken for a "heaven-inspired bard."

James Beattie, 1735–1803

A large contribution to the romantic movement was made by the enthusiasm of the Warton brothers for old English poetry, Gothic architecture, and British antiquities. Joseph, at eighteen, wrote *The Enthusiast, or the Lover of Nature*, resounding with Miltonic echoes and high-pitched praise of nature's wild solitudes, "hollow winds and ever-beating waves." In a defiant spirit of reaction he exclaims:—

Joseph Warton, 1722–1800. Thomas Warton, 1728–1790

> What are the lays of artful Addison,
> Coldly correct, to Shakespeare's warblings wild?

Thomas Warton wrote poems in the *Il Penseroso* strain, and published in 1774 his comprehensive *History of English Poetry*, the first work of its kind, inaccurate but inspiring. This was preceded by his critical *Observations on the Faerie Queene*, in which he was heretic enough to say: "In reading Spenser, if the critic is not satisfied, yet the reader is transported."

Edward Young had written satires, tragedies, and pseudo-Pindarics in the approved style of the period when in 1742 he published the celebrated *Night Thoughts*, a lugubrious blank-verse poem in nine books, or "nights," in which the "solemn sisters," silence and darkness, lend their aid to reflections on life, death, and immortality. Once quite as popular as the *Night Thoughts*

Edward Young, 1681–1765

was Robert Blair's *The Grave*, a classic of the "churchyard school" which inspired the young Bryant to write *Thanatopsis*.

Robert Blair, 1699–1746. Charles Wesley, 1708–1788

Religious poetry was enriched by the hymns of Charles and John Wesley, founders of the Methodists, who with George Whitefield preached a religion of purer and deeper spirituality, in the great revolt against the cold and stereotyped formalism of the Established Church.

The appearance in 1765 of Bishop Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* marks an epoch in eighteenth-century poetry. In spite of Johnson's boisterous ridicule, the charm of the collection was soon felt, and it has never diminished.

Thomas Percy, 1729–1811

With devoted enthusiasm Percy collected, from faded manuscripts and out-of-the-way sources, the old songs and ballads of the people; patched together fragments, polishing and often rewriting to make his waifs more presentable, as he mistakenly thought, and deprecatingly offered them to the public: "In a polished age like the present, I am sensible that many of these reliques of antiquity will require great allowances to be made for them." We now smile at the good Bishop's fears, which then were not without cause. For the old ballads, says Beers, "were everything that the eighteenth century was not. They were rough and wild, where that was smooth and tame; they dealt, with fierce sincerity, in the elementary passions of human nature. They did not moralize, or philosophize, or sentimentalize; were not subtle, intellectual, or abstract. They used plain English without finery or elegance."

The *Reliques* was an introduction to a new world of poetry, or the rediscovery of a lost world. Now were heard again the ringing songs of the people of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, "Chevy Chase," "The Child of Elle," "The Nut-Brown Maid," "Robin Hood," Desdemona's "Willow, Willow," "The Children of the Wood," "Sir Patrick Spence." "To atone for the rudeness of the more obsolete poems," the timid editor

included many "little elegant pieces" whose merit would not be questioned, such as Marlowe's "Passionate Shepherd," Lyly's "Cupid and Campaspe," and Breton's "Phillida and Corydon."

Influence of the Reliques

Percy's collection contributed to literature in many ways. It rescued from destruction many precious gems of old song. It led others to make similar collections, like Scott's *Border Minstrelsy*. It helped to reform literary taste, to restore the simple and direct expression of natural feeling. It inspired the great poets, and furnished the seed-thoughts for the *Ancient Mariner* and *Lady of the Lake*. Wordsworth declared that English poetry had been "absolutely redeemed by it"; Scott was enraptured with these "beloved volumes;" and from Scott to Rossetti, Morris, and Tennyson, the poets have been happily influenced by the magic of Percy's *Reliques*.

Collins and Gray

1721–1759; 1716–1771

Two poets of the highest order of genius, Collins and Gray, gave to the romantic movement force, dignity, and permanence by embodying its spirit in poems of imperishable worth. Their few precious pieces, all purely lyrical, stand out as "portentous exceptions" to the conventional standards of eighteenth-century poetry.

A Brief Life of Pain

William Collins spent his brief life in poverty and suffering, the victim of melancholia that settled into insanity. He was born in Chichester, and there at thirty-eight died in the home of his sister, adjoining the Cathedral. After leaving Oxford he spent a few years in London, dallying with literary hopes and projects that came to nothing. Delicately organized like Shelley, imaginative and impractical, inclined, says Johnson, "to gaze on the magnificence of golden palaces," he could not endure the rigors of literary adventure. In 1746 he issued a thin pamphlet of *Odes*,

on which his reputation rests. They were coldly received, and in angry dejection he burned the unsold copies. His poet's heart was never warmed by praise.

The Odes, 1746

Collins is generally represented by the *Ode on the Passions*, but far superior to this is the *Ode to Evening*, the very perfection of twilight poetry, pure, sweet, and pensive like the music of the flute. It is written in a Horatian stanza, and the absence of rhyme is not noticed, so exquisitely is the melody shaded to the thought. In this as in "How sleep the brave," a little "gem of purest ray serene," there is a true Greek quality, a refined sense of form combined with delicacy of feeling. Listen to this romantic note from his classic instrument:—

> But when chill blustering winds, or driving rain,
> Forbid my willing feet, be mine the hut,
> That from the mountain's side,
> Views wilds, and swelling floods,
>
> And hamlets brown, and dim-discovered spires;
> And hears their simple bell, and marks o'er all
> Thy dewy fingers draw
> The gradual dusky veil.

Romantic Inspiration

The *Ode on the Popular Superstitions of the Highlands* was a splendid prelude to the larger romantic outburst from this native source. It was inspired by the poet's Scotch friend, John Home, whose tragedy *Douglas* had achieved a success in London. Collins represents a transition, the melting of frigid classicism in the warm spring of a new inspiration. His superiority to Gray is questionable. Swinburne calls him "a solitary song-bird among many more or less excellent pipers and pianists."

Thomas Gray was born in London in 1716, the child of a tyrant father and a devoted mother. He was educated at Eton and Cambridge. The most noteworthy event in the simple annals of his life was a sojourn of nearly three years on the continent with his lifelong friend, Horace Walpole. In

this brief period of happiness he added to his fine classical education a knowledge of the literature and arts of France and Italy. The effect upon him of Alpine scenery is significant. From the Grande Chartreuse he writes: "Not a precipice, not a torrent, not a cliff, but is pregnant with religion and poetry." Some forty years earlier Addison recorded his impressions of the same journey:

Preparation for Poetry

THE CHURCH AT STOKE POGES

"A very troublesome journey over the Alps; my head is still giddy with mountains and precipices." The modern taste for natural scenery may be said to have originated with Gray.

In Cambridge, as a resident of Peterhouse, and finally of Pembroke, he spent the greater part of his life, in studious seclusion, broken only occasionally by what he called his "Lilliputian travels" about England and Scotland, visits to the British Museum, and vacations at Stoke Poges, where his mother found a home with her sisters. He declined the honor of the laureateship, avowing that he "would rather be sergeant-trumpeter or pin-maker to

His Cloistral Life

the palace." He died in his rooms at Pembroke and was buried within the shadow of the little church at Stoke Poges.

Gray was frail in physique, shy and timid, seldom seen among men, writing little for the public eye and publishing that little reluctantly. "A shrimp of an author," he called himself.

Personal Characteristics

From early childhood "melancholy marked him for her own"; the gentle sadness of his poetry is a direct reflection of his temperament. In his prose, however, there is a sly and delicious humor. He was one of the broadest scholars among English poets. The finest qualities of the classics he absorbed; he knew architecture and music scientifically; he made precise notes on birds and flowers, anticipating the charming memoranda of Gilbert White's *Natural History of Selborne*. Sensitive to all literary influences, he was a keen and judicious critic, liberal beyond his age. His striving for perfection was almost fatal to composition; "his attar of roses was distilled slowly and painfully, drop by drop." He was two years and a half writing *The Bard*, and the *Elegy*, begun in 1742, was not finished until 1750.

Gray began as a classicist, an avowed disciple of Dryden, and ended as an enthusiastic romanticist, translating Norse and Welsh hero-legends. The early odes, *On Spring*, *On a Distant Prospect of Eton College*, and *To Adversity*, are written in the

Gray's Odes

prevailing fashion of moralizing and personified abstractions. In *The Progress of Poesy* and *The Bard* he revived the true Pindaric form of the ode. To the didactic Johnson these sister odes were a bewilderment. He complained of obscurity, confusion of imagery, and "ungraceful ornaments." Still worse: "I do not see that *The Bard* promotes any truth, moral or political"! But standards of criticism have changed. *The Progress of Poesy*, says Lowell, "in reach, variety, and loftiness of poise, overflies all other English lyrics like an eagle."

The poetry of melancholy reached its culmination in the *Elegy Written in a Country Church Yard*, a supreme master-

piece of tender melody and perfect harmony of music and sentiment. The opening stanza, which the critic Hutton regarded as "the most *poetical* lines in all English poetry," may well serve as a touchstone of excellence:—

Gray's Elegy

> The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
> The lowing herd winds slowly o'er the lea,
> The plowman homeward plods his weary way,
> And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

The thought of the *Elegy* is commonplace, as critics have not failed to observe, but it is the commonplace idealized and sanctified by the touch of genius, "divine truisms," said Tennyson, "that make me weep." In the judgment of John Morley, "the immortal *Elegy* has given to greater multitudes of men more of the exquisite pleasure of poetry than any other single piece in all the glorious treasury of English verse."

A remarkable sensation was created by the appearance, in 1760, of the poems of "Ossian," purporting to have been translated from the Gaelic of the Scotch Highlands by James Macpherson. Their authenticity was questioned and a fierce controversy arose. That long epics like *Fingal* and *Temora*, composed in the third century, could have been handed down orally through fifty generations was not probable; on the other hand, the poetic merit of these strange chantings of primitive passion in rhythmic prose could not be questioned. "They are full of nature and wild imagination," wrote Gray enthusiastically; "I am gone mad about them." And an Ossianic madness swept over England and all Europe. Goethe was captivated by this "Celtic Homer," and the "Ossianic mood" of melancholy in the presence of wild natural scenery was long affected by Byron and other poets, and reappeared in our own time in "Fiona Macleod." A brief passage will illustrate the vivid imagery and the prevailing tone of sadness:—

Poems of Ossian, 1760

I have seen the walls of Balclutha, but they were desolate. The fire had resounded in the halls, and the voice of the people is heard no more. The stream of Clutha was removed from its place by the fall of the walls. The thistle shook there its lonely head; the moss whistled to the wind. The fox looked out from the windows, the rank grass of the wall waved round its head. Desolate is the dwelling of Moina, silence is in the house of her fathers. . . . As the dark shades of autumn fly over hills of grass, so, gloomy, dark, successive came the chiefs of Lochlin's echoing woods. Tall as the stag of Morven, moved stately before them the King. His shining shield is on his side, like a flame on the heath at night.

With the Ossianic excitement is associated the tragic story of Thomas Chatterton. This "marvelous boy" lived in Bristol, learned to read from an old black-letter Bible, absorbed the antiquarianism that was in the air, and transformed his home by the churchyard of St. Mary Radcliffe into a dreamland of mediæval lore. At fifteen he astonished his neighbors with poems and historical documents, written on faded parchment in fifteenth-century script, which he pretended to have found in an old chest in the muniment-room of the church. He went to London to try his literary fortune, and soon, too poor to live and too proud to beg, in a lonely garret he ended his misery with poison in his eighteenth year. The *Rowley Poems*, published after his death, are called forgeries, but the fraud was only in their dress. Stripped of their antique spelling, they reveal an original and artistic genius, a wild freshness of imagination that fascinated Keats, and Shelley, and Coleridge, for whom he was the "sweet harper of time-shrouded minstrelsy."

Thomas Chatterton, 1752-1770

William Cowper

1731–1800

That element of the reactionary movement often described as "the return to nature" received its strongest impulse from William Cowper, whose poetry stands midway between the

"mechanic art" of Pope and the inspired naturalism of Wordsworth. This shy recluse was nearer the modern man than any other poet of the century except Burns.

Nature-Lover and Humanitarian

Admiration of nature, which in Thomson was placid and cold, in Cowper was warmed almost to ecstasy. "Oh! I could spend whole days and moonlight nights in feeding upon a lovely prospect," he says. "My eyes drink the rivers as they flow." He was the first poet to love nature for her own sake, and the first to love animals. The heart is "unfit for human fellowship," he says—

> that is not pleased
> With sight of animals enjoying life,
> Nor feels their happiness augment his own.

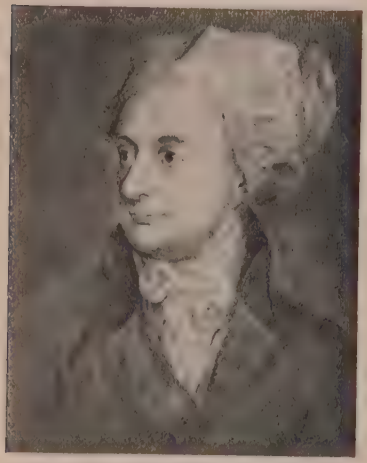
He was the first poet to preach compassion for the poor, freedom and the brotherhood of man, the suppression of slavery, and social and educational reforms. In 1783, six years before the event, he foreshadowed the fall of the Bastille, with which the French Revolution began. In short, this gentle reformer was a singular epitome of the ideas of the revolutionary epoch near at hand.

Cowper was born in the rectory of Berkhamstead in 1731. His mother died when he was six years old, and the frail and sensitive child was committed to the barbarous life of the boarding-schools. At Westminster school one of his masters was Vincent Bourne, whose famous Latin poems he afterwards translated. He studied law and became a member of the Inner Temple. A clerkship in the House of Lords opened to him, but terror of the required examination, added to a tendency to melancholia, brought him to insanity and an attempt at suicide. After some months in an asylum, he was restored, apparently through the awakening of religious faith.

A Broken Life in Retirement

The rest of his life he spent in quiet country places, "a stricken deer that left the herd," tenderly cared for by friends who were

sometimes more zealous than wise in prescribing for his malady a too steady diet of Calvinistic religion. The little village of Olney, on the "slow-winding Ouse," where he lived with Mrs. Unwin, the beloved "My Mary" of his poems, is now celebrated as the "home of Cowper." Here he was pleasantly occupied with gardening, carpentry, caring for his pet hares, and walks in the fields, living always, however, in the shadow of a great fear, the return of his insanity, to which he finally succumbed in pitiable ruin.



WILLIAM COWPER
From the Portrait by Romney, engraved by William Blake

Cowper's poetry was an accident rather than a purpose. His friends urged him to write, perceiving the benefit of such mental occupation. With the Reverend John Newton he wrote the *Olney Hymns*, some of which are familiar in the hymnals, as "God moves in a mysterious way" and "Oh, for a closer walk with God." Mrs. Unwin induced him to produce the Moral Satires, *Table Talk*, *Progress of Error*, *Truth*, and others. But Cowper was too much out of the world to be its public censor, and these poems are for the most part dully didactic.

Religious and Didactic Poems

His most famous poem, *The Task*, was due to the sparkling and vivacious Lady Austin, whose friendship was a magic influence that for a time released the fundamental humor and joyous spontaneity of his nature. There were frolicsome jests

at the strict little tea-table in the Olney home, and laughter relieved the long prayers. One evening Lady Austin told the story of *John Gilpin*. Cowper was heard laughing over it during the night and in the morning he appeared with his inimitable ballad. She urged him to attempt some large work in Miltonic blank verse, to which he agreed on condition that she give him a subject. "Oh, you can write upon anything," she said; "write upon this sofa." The very absurdity of the suggestion pleased his fancy, and in a mock-heroic tone he began *The Sofa*, which grew into *The Task*.

The Task, 1785

The poem is without plan, a ramble through religious, political, and social fields, like one of the poet's morning walks. We forget the didacticism in our enjoyment of the wonderful series of landscape pictures and domestic scenes. Cowper, anticipating Wordsworth's rule, described nature with "eye steadily fixed on the object," and always with absolute simplicity and genuineness. Note the minute observation in these charming lines, describing the sounds—

> Of neighboring fountain, or of rills that slip
> Through the cleft rock, and, chiming as they fall
> Upon loose pebbles, lose themselves at length
> In matted grass, that with a livelier green
> Betrays the secret of their silent course.

Cowper's fame rests secure in his shorter poems, which embody the tenderness, pathos, or pure delight of the incident or feeling of the moment. *To Mary* and *On the Receipt of my Mother's Picture* are unrivaled in the poetry of the affections; the *Loss of the Royal George* still moves Englishmen to tears; *Yardley Oak* is monumental like the ancient oak it celebrates; *The Needless Alarm*, says Goldwin Smith, "is in its humble way one of the most perfect of human compositions." Cowper's last years were occupied with a translation of Homer, excellent in many ways, more faithful to the original than Pope's, but never popular.

The Shorter Poems

Whatever may be one's experience with the poems, one never fails to enjoy Cowper's *Letters*, deliciously garrulous chronicles of his simple life, making miniature epics out of trifles, full of frolicsome humor mingling with imaginary terrors, and written in graceful English. When writing to the Reverend John Newton, his spiritual mentor, his "thoughts are clad in a sober livery," but to others, especially his cousin, Lady Hesketh, the good angel of his last years, he pours forth his natural sunshine. He writes of his hares' exploits, his goldfinches, tame pigeons, and tiny garden house that "Lord Bute's gardener could take upon his back and walk away with"; he discusses topics of the day, the new books, the *Lives of the Poets* by Johnson, for whose treatment of Milton he wishes he "could thrash his old jacket till I made his pension jingle in his pocket." In Southey's opinion Cowper is "the best of English letter-writers." Certainly he ranks with Gray, Walpole, Lamb, and Fitzgerald, the masters of this form of literary art.

His Delightful Letters

A severe shock was given to the eighteenth-century sense of poetic dignity by George Crabbe in *The Village*, published in 1783, two years before *The Task*. Crabbe undertook to tell the plain truth about country life, in contrast with the conventional idealization of it in pastoral poetry; as Hazlitt complained, "to dispel the illusion, the glory, and the dream, which had hovered over it in golden verse from Theocritus to Cowper." "I paint the cot," says Crabbe—

George Crabbe, 1754–1832

> As truth will paint it, and as bards will not.

His village is no "sweet Auburn," but a scene of coarse, drinking, fighting peasantry, bound down to ceaseless toil and poverty. The realism is precise and impartial, gloomy and sickening. In his unrelenting pursuit of truth, Crabbe overlooked beauty and therefore failed to make poetry. But *The Village* was a

sensational success, and was followed by *The Parish Register*, *The Borough*, and other tuneless strains.

The opposite extreme, the excess of romantic idealism, is represented by the visionary William Blake, a poet strangely inspired, isolated, neglected by his contemporaries, yet the most original and independent poet of his century. He was born a dreamer and always lived in a world of visions and spiritual presences. When four years old, he saw "God put his forehead to the window," and was whipped for persistently saying that he found Ezekiel sitting in a field. Fairies and ghosts were realities to him; he sometimes asserted that his poems were dictated by spirits. He was uneducated except as he read the Bible, the old poets, and the book of nature. "Everything that lives is holy," was his mystical creed. Whether he was sane or crazy is still a question. In thought and expression he was a religious mystic. By profession he was a painter and engraver, and made a unique combination of these arts with poetry, engraving poem and illustration on a copper plate, then printing and coloring the impression by hand. His illustrations for Blair's *Grave* and the *Book of Job* are among the most celebrated examples of graphic art.

William Blake, 1757–1827

As a poet Blake is chiefly known by a few choice lyrics culled from his diffuse poetizing, much of which is so strange and enigmatic as to be unintelligible. In the *Poetical Sketches*, *Songs of Innocence*, and *Songs of Experience* the notes of Elizabethan freedom and joy are heard. His best songs express the simplicity and the irresponsible imaginativeness of childhood, bright with the dewy freshness of morning. They dance and sing like happy children—

Songs of Innocence, 1789

> Piping down the valleys wild,
> Piping songs of pleasant glee.

Blake has the child's way of treating nature with a companionable intimacy; he talks with the little lambs and hears the

blossom consoling the mourning robin. Nothing produced in the *Il Penseroso* strain of the period is more beautiful than the lines *To the Evening Star:*—

> Thou fair-haired Angel of the Evening,
> Now, whilst the sun rests on the mountains, light
> Thy torch of love; thy radiant crown
> Put on, and smile upon our evening bed!
> Smile on our loves; and, while thou drawest the
> Blue curtains of the sky, scatter thy silver dew
> On every flower that shuts its sweet eyes
> In timely sleep. Let thy west wind sleep on
> The lake; speak silence with thy glimmering eyes,
> And wash the dusk with silver.

Robert Burns

1759–1796

The graven images of classical formalism were rudely tumbled from their pedestals by the plow-boy poet, Robert Burns. Poetry finally escaped from stately temples and trim gardens to the heather-blown hills and peasant's cot redolent of burning peat. For the artifice of highly cultivated intellect was substituted the natural magic of genius, warmed by a human heart throbbing with elemental emotions. "At last, after so many years," says Taine, "we hear a man's voice! and what is better still, we forget the voice in the emotion which it expresses, we feel this emotion reflected in ourselves, we enter into relations with a soul. Then form seems to fade away and disappear."

Complete Return to Nature

Burns was born in 1759, in a clay cottage built by his father's own hands, still standing near the village of Ayer. Near by are the "Brig o' Doon" and "Alloway's auld haunted kirk." Thousands visit these poetic shrines yearly. The hard-working, intelligent, and devout father is well known from the portrait reverently painted in *The Cotter's Saturday Night.* Robert

was the oldest of seven children, for whom systematic education was impossible. There were a few good books in the home, besides the "big ha'-Bible,"—the *Spectator*, Pope's *Homer*, Ramsay's *Poems*, and a collection of songs of which he says: "I pored over them, driving my cart or walking to labor, song by song, verse by verse." Here he found also a stray copy of Fergusson's *Poems*, which won his heart to poetry forever. The family moved from one hard farm to another, sometimes pursued by the sheriff, always in a bitter struggle to keep the wolf from the door; first to Mt. Oliphant, then to Lochlea, where the poet

A Life of Penury and Poetry

THE BIRTHPLACE OF ROBERT BURNS

was able to brush up his rustic manners in a dancing-school and debating-club in Tarbolton, and then to Mossgiel, where in "the unceasing moil of a galley-slave," as he described his life, he wrote many of his finest poems, including *To a Mouse*, *To a Mountain Daisy*, and the immortal idyl, *The Cotter's Saturday Night*. At this time he plunged into the theological quarrel between the liberals, or New Lights, and the severe Calvinists, called the Auld Lights, and wrote the *Twa Herds*, *Holy Willie's*

Prayer, and the *Holy Fair*, satires that made the poet's friends both laugh and grieve; keen, wittily irreverent, and cruelly just, quite unlike any other satires in our literature.

Burns's farming was always a failure. His poems made him the hero of his neighborhood, but did not buy bread. At twenty-six a crisis in his affairs was reached. The crops were bad, and debts were piling up. Moreover, always in love with some freckled beauty, he was now entangled in a double love-affair with Mary Campbell, the "Highland Mary" who inspired two of his most beautiful songs, and Jean Armour, of whom he wrote "O were I on Parnassus Hill" and "I love my Jean." Thinking to cut all knots with a single stroke, he accepted a clerkship in Jamaica, engaged his passage, wrote his *Farewell* to "the bonnie banks of Ayr," and obtained £20 to pay expenses by publishing his poems. This little volume, printed at Kilmarnock in 1786, then sold for three shillings and is now worth £1,000.

The fame of the poet spread rapidly, and instead of sailing for Jamaica he went to Edinburgh to bring out a second edition of his poems. This visit to the Scottish capital was the one great event in Burns's life. The obscure farmer-poet was suddenly thrust into the light of national renown. He was flattered and feasted by learned and fashionable people, a lion of unusual interest, but he passed through the experience with remarkable dignity and good sense. In appearance he was tall and muscular, with a plowman's stoop of the shoulders, large hands, and wonderful eyes. "I never saw such another eye in a human head," said Scott. In conversation he was eloquent, fascinating everybody with his ready wit, swift emotions, musical voice, glowing features, and kindling eyes.

Visit to Edinburgh

Whatever hopes of a more affluent life may have been raised by this brief contact with greatness were soon dissolved. He married his "bonnie Jean," settled at Ellisland, near Dumfries, for his last disastrous experiment with farming, and to eke

out his income obtained the office of Exciseman. And so the inspired poet gauged whiskey casks and chased smugglers over the moors, until the demon of drink, with whom he had long been too familiar, finally claimed him for his own. His last home was in Dumfries, where he died in poverty and wretchedness, worn out at thirty-seven by habits of dissipation. Yet in these last years he poured forth songs in profusion, one hundred and eighty or more, which have endeared him to Scotland and to the world. Scotland honors all her poets; Burns she loves, with a universal and undiminished love.

Last Years

ROBERT BURNS

The life of Burns is the tragedy of a highly gifted soul struggling hopelessly against itself. He had self-knowledge, but not self-control; he had clear-sighted intelligence, sagacity, the "pith o' sense," yet was the ready servant of ruinous habits and degrading impulses. He was proud, and not entirely without envy of the great folk, but never failed to see that true manhood may dwell beneath a thatched roof. Though morally reckless often, and a scandal to the kirk, he had a deep religious feeling. "A mathematician without religion," he says, "is a probable character; an irreligious poet is a monster." But his aspiring soul could never shake off its earthiness; the vulgarity of the tap-room left its stains on his life and poetry. But the voice of censure

Personal Character

is silenced by his frank self-condemnation. All his poetry is a confession. No poet ever put himself so unreservedly into his poems. And in the presence of his frailties we must always, as Stevenson counsels us, "be gentle in our thoughts."

A Lyric Poet

Burns is the poet of lyric passion; he could not have written epics or dramas. His inspiration came in swift impulses, flashes of intense light and heat quickly burned out. His songs are passionate, compelling utterances, now of the fire and enchantment of love and now of melting, piercing pathos. The force of his lyrics is not in their art, but in their supreme sincerity and naturalness. His own life-blood flows in them; he loves and suffers in the rhythm of his song. Although his language is provincial, he appeals to the world. He is the greatest song-writer in our literature.

Sources of Inspiration

Love of women is his first inspiration; his second is love of country and common humanity. Finding a thistle in the barley, he turned aside his weeder-clips, "an' spared the symbol dear." Nothing in the poetry of patriotism surpasses the ringing war-song, *Scots Wha Hae wi' Wallace Bled*. To everything in Scotland he is devoted—

> Her moors red-brown with heather bells,
> Her banks an' braes, her dens an' dells,

and especially to her common folk, whose toil and suffering he knows only too well. He has a sneaking fondness for honest blackguards like the *Jolly Beggars*, and even some sympathy for the "meikle black deil" himself. He is the herald of modern democratic equality; with high-souled independence he scorns "yon birkit ca'd a lord" and respects no dignity except "pride o' worth." The prophecy that closes the song, *A Man's a Man for a' That*, is to-day the theme of every social sermon.

Next to his love of humanity is Burns's love of nature. He is in sympathy with everything that lives,—the bird in the winter storm, "wee helpless thing," the wounded hare, the

"auld mare, Maggie," the "crimson-tipped" daisy, and the luckless field mouse—

> Wee, sleekit, cow'rin, tim'rous beastie,
> O, what a panic's in thy breastie!
> Thou need na start awa sae hasty,
> Wi' bickering brattle!
> I wad be laith to rin an' chase thee,
> Wi' murd'ring pattle!

The advent of this mouse marks an era in the history of English poetry. Love of nature had been hitherto little more than æsthetic appreciation of landscape. Burns goes beyond Cowper even and humanizes nature. Every "earth-born companion" is his "fellow-mortal," from whom he claims a responsive sympathy. To the wood lark he cries—

> For pity's sake, sweet bird, nae more!
> Or my poor heart is broken.

Like all Scotchmen, Burns must moralize, but he generally does it gracefully, as in *To a Mountain Daisy*. Very unlike the Scotch is his sparkling, triumphant humor, flowing in a stream "so deep and easy," says Stevenson, "that I venture to call him the best of humorous poets." His great masterpiece of humor is *Tam o' Shanter*.

The impressive fact about his verbal style is its inevitableness; the word and the thing for which it stands are one, and there are no tool-marks of art. Epithets are Homeric in concise energy and graphic clearness, like his epithet "red-wat-shod" applied to heroes, in which there is a "vision of horror and carnage"; a phrase contains a complete picture, as of the winter brooks, "burns wi' snawy wreeths upchoked." Burns wrote freely only in his native Lowland dialect, with its broad vowels and strong gutturals, so expressive of open-air vigor and homeliness. His vocabulary was drawn, not from books, but from the soil. His Scotch rings true; his English, especially in his prose, is generally on stilts.

Literary Qualities

"A virtue, as of green fields and mountain breezes, dwells in his poetry," says Carlyle. He paints Scotch life—its rigors of piety, independence, whiskey, and all—with colors shading from satiric humor to tenderest pathos; his laughter mingles with his tears, like the swift alternation of Scotch sunshine and rain. The climate is in his verse; it is a strong and wholesome tonic, because it is frankly human, and because it breathes the spirit of eternal youth:—

I jouk beneath misfortune's blows
As weel's I may;
Sworn foe to sorrow, care, and prose,
I rhyme away.

PROGRAM OF WORK

CLASS READING. Ramsay: *Jenny and Peggy; Through the Wood, Laddie; Peggy; The Highland Laddie.*

Dyer: *Grongar Hill; The Fleece*, 399–440.

Shenstone: *The Dying Kid; Written at an Inn at Henley; The Schoolmistress* (Ward, Bronson).

Thomson, Beattie: Selections from *The Seasons, Castle of Indolence*, and *The Minstrel* (Ward, Manly, or Bronson).

Wesley: *Christmas Hymn; Easter Hymn; Christ, the Refuge of the Soul; Catholic Love; For the Youngest.*

Percy: Read the *Reliques* extensively, the more the better.

Collins: *Ode to Evening; Ode: How sleep the brave; The Passions; Ode on the Popular Superstitions of the Highlands.*

Gray: *Ode on the Spring; Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College; Elegy Written in a Country Church Yard; The Progress of Poesy; The Bard; Sonnet on the Death of Mr. Richard West; Sketch of his own Character.*

Chatterton: *An Excellent Ballad of Charity; The Bristowe Tragedy; Minstrel's Roundelay.*

Ossian: Selection in Manly.

Crabbe: *The Village*, bk. I.

Cowper: *On the Receipt of my Mother's Picture; To Mary; On the Loss of the Royal George; John Gilpin; Yardley Oak; On the Death of Mrs. Throckmorton's Bullfinch; The Castaway; The Task:* I, 103–209, Rural Sights and Sounds; II, 1–47, Retirement, 206–254, England; III, 108–134, Autobiographic; IV, 1–41, The Postman, 120–156, The Winter Fireside; VI, 1–185, Winter Meditations. The *Letters* (Golden Treasury).

BLAKE: *The Piper; To the Evening Star; Song: How sweet I wandered; Mad Song; The Lamb; The Tiger; Ah, Sunflower; The Echoing Green; To Spring; Cradle Song: Sleep, sleep, beauty bright.*

BURNS: *Cotter's Saturday Night; Mary Morison; My Nanie, O; Of a' the Airts the Wind can Blaw; To a Mouse; To a Mountain Daisy; Address to the Deil; Epistle to a Young Friend; A Bard's Epitaph; Auld Lang Syne; John Anderson; The Banks o' Doon; Highland Mary; To Mary in Heaven; From an Epistle to J. Lapraik; A Red, Red Rose; Scots Wha Hae wi' Wallace Bled; A Man's a Man for a' That; Tam o' Shanter.*

LITERARY HISTORY AND CRITICISM. Beers's *English Romanticism in the Eighteenth Century;* Symons's *Romantic Movement in English Poetry;* Phelps's *Beginnings of the English Romantic Movement;* Cambridge, vol. x, ch. v (Thomson), ch. vi (Gray); Gosse's *Eighteenth Century;* Shairp's *Poetic Interpretation of Nature*, chs. xii, xiii; Palgrave's *Landscape in Poetry;* Courthope, vol. v, ch. xii; Nutt's *Ossian and Ossianic Literature;* Reed's *English Lyrical Poetry*, ch. vii; Stephen's *Hours in a Library* (Cowper, Crabbe, Gray); Macaulay's *Thomson* (E. M. L.); Bronson's *Selections from Collins* (Athenæum); Gosse's *Gray* (E. M. L.); Gray's *Essays, Criticisms and Letters* (Belles-Lettres); Lowell's *Latest Literary Essays;* Arnold's *Essays in Criticism*, Second Series; Dobson's *Eighteenth-Century Vignettes*; Smith's *Cowper* (E. M. L.); Wright's *Cowper;* Benham's *Cowper's Letters* (G. T. S.); Brooke's *Theology in the English Poets* (Cowper, Burns); More's *Shelburne Essays*, Third Series; Birrell's *Res Judicatæ;* Yeats's *Selections from Blake* (Muses' Library); Symons's *Blake;* Benson's *Essays* (Blake, Gray); More's *Shelburne Essays*, Fourth Series (Blake); Skeat's *Works of Chatterton;* Beers, ch. x; Ainger's *Crabbe* (E. M. L.); Woodberry's *Makers of Literature* (Crabbe, Cowper); Shairp's *Burns* (E. M. L.); Blackie's *Burns* (G. W.); Smith's Globe Edition; Carlyle's *Essay on Burns;* Stevenson's *Familiar Studies;* Curtis's *Orations and Addresses;* Lang's *Letters to Dead Authors;* Shairp's *Aspects of Poetry;* Hawthorne's *Our Old Home.*

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION AND RESEARCH

1. Classicism *versus* romanticism (Beers, ch. i; Pater's *Appreciations:* Postscript). 2. Trace through the century, making lists of names and dates, the different lines of romantic revolt:

a. The appreciation of natural scenery (Beers, iv).

b. Influence of Spenser's *Faerie Queene* (Beers, iii).

c. Influence of Milton's poems (Beers, v).

d. The editing and stage revival of Shakespeare's plays (Richardson's *Shakespeare and his Critics*).

e. The revival of Mediævalism (Beers, vii).

3. Account for the moralizing and melancholy strains in the poetry of the period. 4. Compare closely Blair's *Grave* with *Thanatopsis*, showing Bryant's indebtedness. 5. Influence of the Methodist movement on literature (Courthope, vol. v, ch. xi).

6. Mingling of the classic and romantic elements in Collins and Gray. 7. Make a study of the classic ode (consult article on Poetry, Ency. Brit. 10th Ed.). 8. Analyze and describe the personal character of Gray. 9. Account for Gray's small poetic product (consult Arnold, in his *Essays* or in the Introduction to Ward's *Poets*).

10. The making of Percy's *Reliques* (Beers, ch. viii). 11. Dr. Johnson's contempt for ballads (*Rambler*, no. 177; Beers, p. 288). 12. Give an account of the Ossian controversy (Beers, ch. ix; Nutt). 13. Why did Chatterton present his poems as forgeries?

14. Find in Cowper passages indicating an intimate feeling for nature unknown before in the century. 15. Compare Cowper's nature descriptions with Thomson's; for example, two winter scenes. 16. Cowper's humor (Poems and Letters).

17. Give an account of Burns's Edinburgh experience. 18. Compare Burns's concrete, realistic pictures with the vague, abstract description of previous poets. 19. Why would it have been impossible for Burns to write an epic poem? 20. Discuss Reed's summary: "To express the deepest feelings in the simplest manner, was Burns's gift."

CHAPTER XVI

THE PERIOD OF REVOLUTION

1798–1832

The placid and self-satisfied eighteenth century ended in a storm of reaction and revolt. The upheaval of the French Revolution transformed all Europe. England was spared its most violent and bloody aspects, but was deeply affected by its political and moral elements. With the fall of the Bastille, the symbol of ancient tyranny, in 1789, a new era of history opened.

Influence of the French Revolution

The past was torn up by the roots; social institutions were shattered as by an earthquake shock; out of the chaos was evolved a new species of man, the modern self-governing, democratic man. Young and ardent minds were thrilled by the cry of the Revolution, "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity." It seemed to be the dawn of a new day for humanity, the bright morning of expanding faith and glorious promises. Burns's dream of universal brotherhood seemed about to be realized. Young poets embraced the new ideas with wild enthusiasm.

> Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
> But to be young was very heaven,

says Wordsworth, whose "terrific democratic notions" appalled his friends. Coleridge boldly described a noble lord as bearing "the leprous stain of nobility." Blake appeared in the London streets wearing the red liberty cap. All were nourished,

like Shelley's Alastor, "by solemn vision and bright silver dream."

Revolution and Romanticism

The stimulating power of the French Revolution quickly allied itself with the reactionary movement for freedom and individuality in literature. The union of the two forces, romanticism and revolution, resulted in an outburst of original creative genius such as had not been known since the Elizabethan period. One of the most important events of literary history was the publication in 1798 of the *Lyrical Ballads* by Wordsworth and Coleridge. As modern democracy dates from the fall of the Bastille, so modern poetry dates from the *Lyrical Ballads*. What had been an instinctive protest and half-hearted revolt on the part of the poets now became a deliberate revolution. The "return to nature" was consummated in Wordsworth's *Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey*, and romantic poetry reached its full triumph in Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*. By these two contributions to the *Lyrical Ballads* people were amazed as by two great stars suddenly blazing forth in the ancient firmament.

The nineteenth century opened with a remarkable group of poets, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, Scott, Byron, Shelley, and Keats, the leaders and makers of modern poetry. All were filled with the spirit of romanticism and all but Scott and Keats were strongly affected by the spirit of the French Revolution. The period from 1798, the year of the *Lyrical Ballads*, to 1832, the year of the Reform Bill, by which the English people finally achieved their liberties, may be called the period of romantic triumph. In these years the seeds of romanticism were taking permanent root in all the arts. Which one of the poets who opened the gates of the new century with such glorious celebration of song is to be regarded as essentially the greatest of the group, is an academic question, interesting to discuss and impossible to decide. It is certain, however, that the inspiring leader in this development of modern poetry was Wordsworth.

Period of Romantic Triumph

TINTERN ABBEY

William Wordsworth

Beethoven — 1770–1850

In the extreme northwest corner of England there is a space about thirty miles square called the Lake District, which is graced by poetic associations beyond all other regions of the kingdom. The road from Coniston to Keswick is a kind of *via sacra*, lined with literary shrines, the homes of Ruskin, Dr. Arnold, Harriet Martineau, Felicia Hemans, De Quincey, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey. The region is filled with the spirit of Wordsworth's poetry, as it is saturated with the mists that fall from old Helvellyn. The sparkling "becks," the storm-swept "pikes," the mountain tarns, and the hills, gorgeous with the gold and purple of gorse and heather, are all elements of his verse. It is well named "Wordsworthshire," and an intimate knowledge of its scenery contributes much to an interpretation of Wordsworth's message to the world.

Wordsworthshire

In Cockermouth, on the north border of this region, Wordsworth was born in 1770. A part of his childhood was spent with his grandfather at Penrith, where his playmate was Mary Hutchinson, the "phantom of delight" who became his wife. At Hawkshead, where he spent his happy school-days, and at Cambridge, he created the impression of a rugged, independent mountain lad, showing more regard for nature than for men and books. After a few years of drifting he returned to the Lakes to spend all his remaining years at Grasmere and at Rydal Mount. The quaint little Dove Cottage, his first home, and later the home of De Quincey, is a shrine visited yearly by a multitude of pilgrims. Near by in the Grasmere churchyard is his grave, marked by a plain marble slab.

The Poet of the Lakes

The story of Wordsworth's external life is as simple as the story of one of his simple poems. The important events of

his life were spiritual experiences, and the course of this inner life is fully described in the remarkable autobiographic poems, *The Prelude* and *The Excursion*. Left an orphan at an early age, he was educated by relatives, who regarded with some impatience his disinclination for practical life. He believed, with a peculiarly devout faith, that his life had been dedicated to poetry by a divine interposition expressed through the influences of nature. A beautiful sunrise, witnessed in early youth, pro-

A Simple and Serene Life

DOVE COTTAGE

duced an exaltation of spirit that to him was a service of consecration:—

> I made no vows, but vows
> Were then made for me; bond unknown to me
> Was given that I should be, else sinning greatly,
> A dedicated spirit.

A bequest of £900 from a friend secured to him the "plain living and high thinking" required by his lofty purpose, and his life became a long calm of poetic meditation and spiritual serenity, seldom interrupted by the world's events. His austere soul was not disturbed even by the attacks of unfriendly critics, nor by the failure of his poetry to find general appreciation.

But recognition and honors came at last. In 1839 he received a degree from Oxford, where he was enthusiastically welcomed as the most eminent poet of the age; and in 1843 he was made poet laureate.

There was just one dramatic event in Wordsworth's career. On leaving college he visited France, just at the outbreak of the Revolution. With heart fired by the cause of liberty, he offered his services to the Girondists, soon after the September Massacres, and was probably saved from the guillotine by the prudence of his friends in compelling his return home by cutting off his funds. As the Revolution developed into bloody despotism, his mind sank into a deep depression of perplexity and despair. His faith, unlike Shelley's, could not subsist on visions and ideals alone; his hopes for a perfected manhood were shattered. Out of this dejection he was led back to the healing influences of nature and of poetry by his sister Dorothy, who henceforth was the constant and inspiring comrade of his intellectual experiences:—

Wordsworth and the French Revolution

> She whispered still that brightness would return,
> She, in the midst of all, preserved me still
> A poet.

Much of the delicacy of observation and sentiment in his poems is due to the sympathy of this devoted sister. She was herself a poet in feeling, and her *Diary*, a Wordsworthian prose poem, is a valuable piece of literature.

Wordsworth published in 1793 *An Evening Walk* and *Descriptive Sketches*, poems written in the versification of Pope and in the spirit of Goldsmith, containing for the most part only "prose thought in the ceremonial robes of poetry." His career as an original poet began with the *Lyrical Ballads* in 1798.

The origin of this famous volume is one of the most interesting episodes in the annals of literature. In 1797 Wordsworth

and his sister settled at Alfoxden, a pleasant estate in Somerset on the Bristol channel, within walking distance of Nether Stowey, where Coleridge was living. The two young poets, flushed with the enthusiasm of fresh creative energy, and the sister Dorothy,—"three people, but only one soul," as Coleridge said,—spent their days in long walks and high talks of things noble and beautiful. In these ramblings among the ferny hills and shadowy coombs of the Quantocks, the foundations of modern poetry were shaped. To meet the expense of a walking-trip to Linton, a joint poem was planned, and the final result of this partnership was the *Lyrical Ballads*. This little volume contained twenty-three poems, nineteen written by Wordsworth, including examples of his best and his worst work, and four by Coleridge, including his masterpiece.

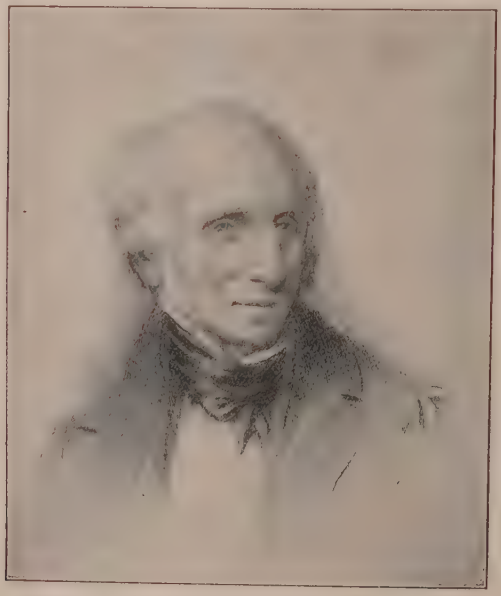
Origin of Lyrical Ballads, 1798

The strange little book, bristling with defiant originality, was a challenge to critics and a bewilderment to readers, and it was hailed with general derision. Its true merits were obscured by the conspicuous absurdities, such as *Goody Blake* and the *Idiot Boy*, and many years passed before its promises of new glories for poetry were generally recognized. It presented new theories of poetry, which in a general way were the culminating principles of romanticism, and these theories were enforced by both precept and example. The prefaces added to successive editions by Wordsworth gave an exposition of poetic doctrine that has been largely accepted as the basis of modern criticism. According to the new doctrine, "the passions of men should be incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature." The poet should "choose incidents and situations from common life," and describe them, as far as possible, "in a selection of language really used by men." Coleridge was to give his attention to "persons and characters supernatural, or at least romantic." Wordsworth was to attempt, by a certain imaginative coloring, to "give the charm

A New Theory of Poetry

of novelty to things of every day and to excite a feeling analogous to the supernatural, by awakening the mind's attention from the lethargy of custom."

Wordsworth was an avowed reformer, and his great aim was to bring poetry back to genuineness of expression. Poetic



WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

expression had become stilted and artificial. The poets would not call simple things by their real names. A peasant's hut was always a "bower," the sun was "Phœbus," a wheat-field was "Ceres' golden reign," the nightingale was "the attic warbler," and an orchard was a "purple grove pomaceous." Wordsworth stripped off this classic tinsel. If his own ex-

pression seems bald, "it is bald as the bare mountain-tops are bald, with a baldness that is full of grandeur," as Arnold suggests. In Wordsworth's inspired moments, he seems to speak as nature herself would speak, with an impressive directness, like the noble sincerity and simplicity of the Bible; when he is merely philosophical or poetically garrulous, he is ponderous, diffusive, and dull. To this extent Jeffrey was right in his summary criticism of *The Excursion*, "This will never do."

Reform of Poetic Expression

Wordsworth is preëminently the poet of nature. No other poet has so profoundly interpreted the external world and conveyed its messages to the heart and soul of man. His devotion to nature is more than love and admiration; it is a sacred service, a religion of which he is the high priest, ministering to humanity. Thomson and Gray treated nature æsthetically, as a landscape artist paints nature; Cowper and Burns brought nature into the realm of human sympathy; Wordsworth spiritualized nature, giving to it a soul kindred with the human soul. From early youth he was peculiarly sensitive to the influences of nature; he compares himself in this respect to the æolian harp:—

Wordsworth as a Nature Poet

> Obedient as a lute
> That waits upon the touches of the wind.

Describing his early experiences, he says:—

> The sounding cataract
> Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock,
> The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
> Their colors and their forms, were then to me
> An appetite.

But this was only the beginning of his poetic development, a kind of youthful ecstasy that was to receive the sober coloring of thought and meditation:—

For I have learned
To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity,
Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts: a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still
A lover of the meadows and the woods.
. . . . . well pleased to recognize
In nature and the language of the sense,
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
Of all my moral being.

These lines from the *Tintern Abbey* poem constitute the Wordsworthian creed. Their essential spirit, says Frederic Myers, "was for practical purposes as new to mankind as the essential spirit of the Sermon on the Mount." Wordsworth believed that there is a living and conscious spirit in nature that exerts its beneficent influence upon every heart that "watches and receives." In *Lines Written in Early Spring* he says:—

The Wordsworthian Creed

And 'tis my faith that every flower
Enjoys the air it breathes.

This nature worship of Wordsworth is a kind of philosophical mysticism, becoming often so vague as to be almost unintelligible. It is not always possible for us to share those "authentic tidings of invisible things" which are so freely imparted to him. He has never been a popular poet; his appeal is mainly to mature and reflective minds. There is a chilling austerity about him that repels. He is passionless, deliberate, brood-

A Cold Philosophical Poet

ing over his themes in meditative calm. Hence he is seldom truly lyrical; his ecstasies are always subdued and philosophized; beauty is not enjoyed for its own sake; as in the *Daffodils*, it is the "flash upon the inward eye" that completes the joy.

But in spite of austere aloofness and vast areas of unattractive verse, Wordsworth is a poet whom we cherish, if we do not love. His work must be well sifted and the chaff put out of sight before he can be properly appreciated. He wrote almost continuously for sixty years, but the poems by which his great fame is sustained were all produced in the single decade from 1798 to 1808. Here his genius appears in all its freshness and emphatic originality. Here are the choice nature lyrics, such as *To a Butterfly*, *To the Daisy*, *To a Sky-lark*, the dancing *Daffodils*, the ethereal ode *To the Cuckoo*, the little chaplet of pearls bestowed upon the unknown *Lucy*, the delightful *Yarrow Unvisited*, the tender pastoral *Michael*, and the song of the *Solitary Reaper*, ringing with romantic enchantment—

A Wonderful Decade

> For old, unhappy, far-off things,
> And battles long ago.

The wonderful decade opened with his *Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey* and closed with the *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality*, which Emerson regarded as "the high-water mark of poetry in the nineteenth century." During this brief period, "the earth and every common sight" was for the poet "appareled in celestial light," but soon afterward the "visionary gleam" disappeared in clouds of philosophic didacticism. With an occasional exception, like the splendid *Laodamia*, written in the classic spirit, some of the sonnets, and choice passages in *The Excursion*, the remaining mass of Wordsworth's poetry is inspiring only to the Wordsworthian devotee.

Wordsworth reëstablished the sonnet in English poetry,

and in this form much of his finest work was done. "The sonnet's scanty plot of ground" was for him a wholesome artistic restraint. He was forced to say what he was thinking straightforth, without perambulatory musings. Here, too, he used the best diction he could command. He wrote some four hundred sonnets, the best of which rank with the best of any poet. They lack the passion of Shakespeare's sonnets and of Mrs. Browning's, and the stately simplicity of Milton's, but they abound in noble lines, expressing the intimate association of emotions of the mind with aspects of nature.

Wordsworth's Sonnets

The career of Wordsworth, both as man and as poet, was one of peculiar isolation. He dwelt apart from men, listening from afar to the "still, sad music of humanity." "Thou wert as a lone star," says Shelley, in a beautiful sonnet to the poet. Even the dalesmen of his neighborhood, whose lives he idealized, never comprehended him. Personally he was cold and unamiable, with the habits of a recluse, emphasized by poverty; he was once heard to say that he did not receive enough for his poetry to pay for his shoestrings. His steadfast tranquillity and self-confidence were interpreted as egotism by those who did not understand him. In his mental development he owed little to others. His teachers were nature and solitude:—

An Isolated Poet

> The silence that is in the starry sky,
> The sleep that is among the lonely hills.

As a poet he was without masters and without contemporary disciples. He was indifferent to his contemporaries. He declared that all of Scott's poetry was not worth a sixpence; knew little of Shelley and nothing of Keats; and was undisturbed by the volcanic eruptions of Byron. He was a prophet in the wilderness, whose preaching few heeded; but with sublime faith in his mission to purify and exalt English poetry, he continued to pour forth his message. "Make yourselves

at rest respecting me," he said to solicitous friends; "I speak the truths the world must feel at last."

Southey's summary of his friend's poetry remains essentially correct: "I could point out some of his pieces which seem to me good for nothing, but I know of no poet in any language who has written so much that is good." This is the paradox of Wordsworth's poetry; it is a singular mixture of good and bad, a distinction of which the poet himself seemed to be totally unaware. As Longfellow expresses it, "He soars and sinks and is by turns sublime and commonplace." One of the reasons for these swift descents from the sublime to the ridiculous is Wordsworth's lack of humor, one of the chief safeguards of taste. His taste often became the helpless victim of his theories. A theory is always dangerous to a poet, for it is sure to disturb his spontaneity. Moreover, the world generally is inclined, with Keats, to "hate poetry that has a palpable design upon us." Wordsworth wished to be "considered as a teacher or as nothing," but he is most impressive as a poet when least conscious of his teaching function.

The Wordsworthian Paradox

Poetry and Theory

Whether Wordsworth stands third in the hierarchy of English poets, where Matthew Arnold places him, or fifth, where Lowell places him, it is certain that he is the greatest original creative force in poetry between Milton and Tennyson. The dominance of Byron was temporary; the fascinating power of Shelley has increased, but the deep and permanent streams of influence have flowed from Wordsworth. He enlarged the horizon of poetry, adding new realms of thought and sensation, disclosing in nature not only beauty and mystery, but the very spirit of God. His poetry invites and compels thought; his simplest poems are simple only in the language, which may unexpectedly take on the deepest significance. *We are Seven*, though about a child, is not a child's poem; the little poem *My heart leaps up*, apparently an artless trifle, is in reality the symbolic substance

Wordsworth's Rank and Influence

of the great ode on *Intimations of Immortality*. Fellowship with such a poet is nobly stimulating. He leads us by the pure light of the stars; he braces us with the chill of the sparkling dawn; he appeals always and only to the good that is in us. To dwell with him in thought is to dwell on the heights.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

1772–1834

Wordsworth and his friend Coleridge were strikingly contrasted in character; the one independent, steadfast, and strong as his rock-bound mountains, a spirit compact of confidence and optimism; the other abjectly dependent, frail in will and purpose, a sensitive, quivering spirit cruelly bandied between hope and despair, a pathetic illustration of the frailties of genius.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge was born in beautiful Devonshire, at Ottery St. Mary, in 1772. He was the youngest of thirteen children. The father was an amiable and eccentric vicar and schoolmaster. The boy was strangely precocious, always reading and dreaming. At nine he became a "blue-coat" boy in Christ's Hospital, London, where he found a sympathetic companion in Charles Lamb. He was rigorously disciplined in Latin and Greek, and books of all kinds he read prodigiously. Thinking to become a physician, he read medical works in English, Latin and Greek, and learned a Latin medical dictionary "nearly by heart." This interest gave way to "a rage for metaphysics," and he read the Platonic philosophers and the Church Fathers. Even before his fifteenth year, he had "bewildered himself," he says, "in metaphysics and in theological controversy." At one time he thought himself an infidel, but was cured by a flogging.

Early Education

While in school he fell upon a little volume of *Sonnets* by William Lisle Bowles, which strongly influenced his poetic

Bowles's Sonnets, 1789

development. Wordsworth was similarly affected by this book. The simplicity and sincerity of Bowles's modest verses, free from conventional frippery, was an inspiring revelation to the young poets.

At Cambridge, Coleridge was not distinguished, except for his conversational powers. In his second year he ran away and enlisted in the King's Dragoons, but was soon rescued and returned to the university by friends. His next freak was to leave the university altogether. During a visit to Oxford he met Robert Southey, a young radical like himself, filled with enthusiasm for the French ideals. They were at once fast friends, wrote in partnership a worthless tragedy, *The Fall of Robespierre*, and evolved the Utopian scheme of "Pantisocracy," a sort of communal paradise to be established somewhere on the banks of the Susquehanna.

At Cambridge

SAMUEL COLERIDGE

Coleridge now entered practical life with a very unpractical comprehension of its duties. He received from a friendly publisher an offer of a guinea and a half for each hundred lines of poetry he would write, and thereupon married Sarah Fricker (whose sister a month later became the wife of Southey), settled at Clevedon in a "pretty cot" overgrown with myrtle and jasmine, and sang his happy content in *The Æolian Harp*. He started a magazine, *The Watchman*, which quickly came to an impecunious

Introduction to Life's Realities

end; he lectured on the burning subject of liberty, preached in Unitarian chapels without pay, published a volume of indifferent *Poems on Various Subjects*, and at all times was in a hopeless struggle with his finances.

A friend provided him with a cottage at Nether Stowey, where he was in intimate association with the Wordsworths. In their daily walks among the Quantock Hills the hopes of a new poetry were shaped and the *Lyrical Ballads* were planned. During these walks the poets attempted to compose the *Ancient Mariner* in a line-by-line partnership, but their diverse imaginations would not work in double harness. This year, 1797–8, was Coleridge's *annus mirabilis*, the wonderful year, for in this brief period, under the stimulus of Wordsworth's stronger nature, he wrote essentially all the poetry upon which his fame rests: the *Ancient Mariner*, *Christabel*, *Kubla Khan*, *Ode to France*, *Frost at Midnight*, *Love*, and *The Nightingale*.

Immediately after the publication of *Lyrical Ballads*, Coleridge went to Germany, accompanied by the Wordsworths, and devoted nine months to mastering the German language, literature, and philosophy. The results of this excursion were translations of Schiller's plays and the introduction into England of the philosophy of Kant. Coleridge now followed Wordsworth to the Lake District and found a home for his family with his brother-in-law, Southey, who henceforth became the patient caretaker of his domestic affairs. He himself became a wanderer, dodging in and out of London, where he lectured occasionally on poetry and the fine arts; appearing suddenly at a friend's house here and there, where a flying visit would often be prolonged into a residence of weeks or months. He had become a slave to the opium habit, which paralyzed the creative powers of the poet and left only the speculative philosopher. He wrote for London newspapers; launched without success a new magazine called *The Friend;* and completed the tragedy *Remorse*, which through the aid of Byron was successfully pre-

A Drifting and Freakish Career

sented at Drury Lane. In 1816 he published *Christabel*, which had been lying in manuscript eighteen years; and in 1817 made a collection of his poems entitled *Sibylline Leaves*, "in allusion," he says, "to the fragmentary and wildly scattered state in which they had been long suffered to remain."

The last eighteen years of Coleridge's life were spent at Highgate in the family of Dr. Gillman, under whose skillful and kindly care he was restored to health and to systematic literary activity. Here he exercised the marvelous conversational powers for which he was celebrated, and through which he could best express himself. He was sought and consulted as an oracle by the eager-minded young men of the period, who listened reverently to his inspired monologues. There he sat on the brow of Highgate Hill, "a sublime man," says Carlyle, "a kind of Magus, girt in mystery and enigma."

The Highgate Refuge

The life of Coleridge presents a tragic picture of splendid genius baffled and finally overwhelmed by a weak and vagrant will. The *Ode to Dejection* is a pathetic confession of shattered powers. He frittered away his genius in fragmentary works and projects that always ended in insubstantial dreams. He was always engaged in a losing fight against himself. He could never meet duty face to face. He married hastily and shirked the responsibilities of a husband and father. To alleviate temporary pain, he resorted to opium and became its permanent victim. He could earn money abundantly with his pen, and yet lived mainly upon the charity of friends. He was born for poetry and surrendered his life to prose.

Coleridge's Failures

Yet in spite of its encumbrances, his great spirit was one of the strongest elevating influences of the nineteenth century. Through noble sentiments, rational criticism, and lofty philosophic thought, he influenced and guided the finest minds of the age. He introduced German literature and philosophy into England, and sowed the seeds of transcendentalism gathered from

Kant and Schelling, which came to blossom and fruitage in Emerson. His *Aids to Reflection* came near to being a religious classic. In the *Biographia Literaria* he gave a profound analysis and exposition of the principles of poetry and modern criticism. And in the *Lectures and Notes on Shakespeare* he made one of the most valuable contributions to the critical appreciation of Shakespeare. His poetry was a direct creative force, felt and exemplified by all succeeding poets.

Coleridge's Successes

In Wordsworth, romanticism was a reasoned emotion; in Coleridge it was the natural breath of life. His poetry is veritably a "thing of faerie," conceived on the enchanted heights of dreamland. It is only a fragment, but the fragment is precious and unique. "All that he did excellently might be bound up in twenty pages, but it should be bound in pure gold," writes Stopford Brooke. For perfection of expression and exquisite melody, and for visions of pure fantasy made to seem real, he is unsurpassed. His artistic discrimination is delicate and precise. "The best words in the best order" is his definition of poetry. The one word that describes Coleridge, his personality and his poetry, is fascination. He fascinated everybody with whom he came in contact, as his Ancient Mariner fascinated the Wedding Guest, and his poetry still fascinates readers with its weird charm, and its "light that never was on sea or land."

Qualities of Coleridge's Poetry

Coleridge's masterpiece, the *Ancient Mariner*, is one of the supreme triumphs of imaginative poetry. Its art is perfect. In form it is a ballad, professedly written in imitation of the old ballads; but the hackneyed elements of balladry—rapid movement, repetition, alliteration, and end and interlinear rhyme—he worked into a new structure unknown to English poetry. He gave not only life to the old ballad, but a life different from any it had known before, a life richly endowed with music, magic expression, and

The Ancient Mariner

spiritual power. It is not worth while to search too deeply for the moral of the poem. It was spun out of the pure stuff of dreams, and such creations are as innocent of didactic intent as a wild rose or the purple clouds of sunset. The simple moral appended was regarded by the poet as an "obtrusion." The poem must be felt, rather than understood, or its magic will be ineffective. As one of the most poetical of poems it is, says Lowell, "not only unparalleled, but unapproachable in its kind, and that kind of the rarest."

Christabel

The weirdly romantic *Christabel* is, in Scott's words, "a beautiful and tantalizing fragment." The first part was written in 1797, the second in 1800, and three more parts were planned. All through his life the poet was tormented by his inability to complete the poem. It is fairly certain, however, that he never could have completed it as it was begun. Lamb, with his penetrating good taste, advised him not to try to finish it. Even the second part is much inferior to the first. The magic wand was broken. The clear and alluring light of romance with which his vision was illuminated in that wonderful year at Stowey was never so pure and clear again. The power of the poem is in the subtle atmosphere of enchantment, produced by natural means—the midnight owl, the howling mastiff, the shadowy wood, the flare of fire on the hearth; in the pervading contrast of beauty and horror, symbolizing the eternal conflict of good and evil in the human heart, with other illusive hints of "deeper meanings than were ever there"; and in the music of the verse, ever varying to fit the sentiment and action.

A New Poetic Form

In this poem Coleridge gave to English poetry an essentially new meter, consisting of a free interchange of iambics and anapests, harmonized by four accents to the line, with a varying rhyme scheme. This flexible form was adopted by Scott and Byron as a welcome relief from the rigid iambic verse, and has worked a revolution in modern verse in favor of metrical freedom. The follow-

ing passage illustrates the tone of haunting mystery and the varied rhythmic movement:—

> The night is chill; the forest bare;
> Is it the wind that moaneth bleak?
> There is not wind enough in the air
> To move away the ringlet curl
> From the lovely lady's cheek—
> There is not wind enough to twirl
> The one red leaf, the last of its clan,
> That dances as often as dance it can,
> Hanging so light, and hanging so high,
> On the topmost twig that looks up at the sky.

Robert Southey, 1774–1843

The third in the trio of "Lakers" was Robert Southey, neighbor of Wordsworth and patient friend of Coleridge. Once equally famous as a poet, and for thirty years England's poet laureate, Southey is now, except for a few short poems, quite forgotten. His once famous Oriental epics, *Thalaba* and *The Curse of Kehama*, are big but not great, merely manufactured products of the pen. It is evidence, however, of the omnivorous appetite for romance in that period that they were read as eagerly as the tales of Scott and Byron. Southey had talent, earnestness, taste, and vast learning, and he wrote excellent prose. One book, the *Life of Nelson*, is a classic. He lacked nothing but inspiration. But his manly character, fidelity to friends and to his domestic obligations, love of books, and stupendous literary industry command lasting respect.

The Romantic Novel

Before considering the epochal work of the great enchanter, Sir Walter Scott, we must glance at a few transitional products of romanticism that enjoyed great temporary fame and exercised considerable influence on the literature of the nineteenth century. As Lowell said of transcendentalism, the romantic

movement was a breaking of windows to let in the fresh air. The imagination, long suffocated by the classical proprieties, in the excitement of freedom now indulged in strange pranks, especially after-dark romps and dubious adventures with hobgoblins.

Walpole's *Castle of Otranto* brought forth a large brood of imitations, the most celebrated of which was Mrs. Radcliffe's *Mysteries of Udolpho.* Here is all of Walpole's machinery for producing blood-curdling, "goose-fleshing" sensations, working with increased efficiency—the gloomy castle, haunted chambers, underground passages, trap-doors, sliding panels, great echoing halls filled with ghostly presences, blood-stained manuscripts recording horrible crimes. The reader is rushed breathless from one strange event to another, his nerves harrowed by all the accompaniments of superstitious terror. Mrs. Radcliffe is exceedingly ingenious in the art of suspense, by which the reader's curiosity is thwarted just at the climactic moment of greatest excitement. She is equally clever in creating an atmosphere of ominous dread and mystery, in which the marvelous seems quite the natural thing. She includes in her entertainment the sentimentalism of Clarissa Harlowe, making her tender heroine weep at sight of the moon or sound of wind in the trees; and entangled in it all is a moral purpose, unexceptionable if not edifying. A genuine poetic sense of natural beauty is found in the descriptions, especially of moonlight scenery. The *Romance of the Forest* and others by this author are the same melodramatic mixture of sublimity and absurdity.

Ann Radcliffe, 1764–1823

Of this school of nightmare fiction are also the once famous *Vatheck*, a gorgeous Oriental romance by William Beckford, in which the characters expiate their sins in the "halls of Eblis," bearing eternally their flaming hearts in their hands; William Godwin's didactic-romantic *Caleb Williams;* Shelley's youthful extravaganzas, *Zastrozzi* and *St. Irvyne,* in which the heroine plunges a dagger into her

The Nightmare School

heart and falls "weltering in purple gore"; and Mrs. Shelley's *Frankenstein*, which is perhaps the most meritorious and ghastly example of the Gothic romance. The most successful experiment with historical romance before Scott was made by Jane Porter in *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, 1803, which deals with the Polish exiles of 1793, and the *Scottish Chiefs*, 1809, a story of the days of Wallace and Bruce. In these stories the history is a flavor rather than a veritable substance, and sentimental tears fall as easily as Scotch rain.

Jane Austen

1775–1815

Reaction against this type of fiction was inevitable, and it first appeared with artistic effectiveness in the graceful work of Jane Austen. In *Northanger Abbey*, written in 1798, the Udolpho school of novelists is treated with delicious mockery. The romanticized heroine insists upon finding a mystery in every dark corner she visits. To her friend who asks about her progress with *Udolpho*, she replies:—

> Yes, I have been reading it ever since I woke; and I am got to the black veil.
>
> Are you, indeed? How delightful! Oh! I wouldn't tell you what is behind the black veil for all the world! Are not you wild to know? Oh! yes, quite; what can it be? But do not tell me; I wouldn't be told on any account. I know it must be a skeleton; I am sure it is Laurentia's skeleton. Oh! I am delighted with the book!

Jane Austen, the daughter of a Hampshire clergyman, spent her life in the little village of Steventon and the neighboring Chawton, died in Winchester, and was buried in the great cathedral. She was never outside England, and never saw a larger social world than that of Bath. She was isolated in education as in experience; there is no allusion in her books to the French Revolution, in progress while she was writing, and

no evidence of the influence of the authors of the period. Her detachment was thoroughly provincial. Her world was the village society of squires, parsons, doctors, sportsmen, gossiping wives and old maids—a world in which the chief interest was matrimony; and in which the tranquillity of commonplace was seldom disturbed by anything more violent than a game of whist or an afternoon tea-party. To produce an exact picture of this little world, touched up with the graces of literary art, was the task Jane Austen undertook and executed with a skill that has secured to her an enduring place among the greatest English novelists. Her six novels, a "human comedy in six books," are more popular to-day than at any other time since they were written. *Pride and Prejudice*, her masterpiece, written in 1797, and *Sense and Sensibility* went begging for a publisher fourteen years. *Emma*, published in 1816, secured the first mild commendation of the critics.

An Author of Intense Provincialism

JANE AUSTEN

Jane Austen was unintentionally as much a reformer as Wordsworth. She brought imaginative literature back to sanity and the truth of nature, eliminated the grossness, and refined the style of eighteenth-century fiction. In a period given over frantically to romanticism and the shams of sentimentalism, she was a realist, bringing to perfection the old novel of manners, and revealing in her precise work the prototype of the modern art of Howells and James. Within its narrow limits her art is flawless. Her

Realism and Refinement

method is that of the miniature-painter—"a little bit (two inches wide) of ivory on which I work with so fine a brush as produces little effect after much labor"—picturing the gentilities and simplicities of her domestic scenes with minute and affectionate elaboration, and with a precision and lucidity of expression worthy of the Greeks. But the chief charm in her novels is the gently satirical humor that pervades them, a "delicious, quiet mirth, so quiet as to be inaudible to gross ears." Indeed, discernment is required for the full appreciation of the rare delicacy of her art, and therefore the novels are still "caviare to the general"; but to be able to turn with enjoyment from the latest "best seller" of the day to one of Jane Austen's stories is a distinct evidence of culture.

Sir Walter Scott

1771–1832

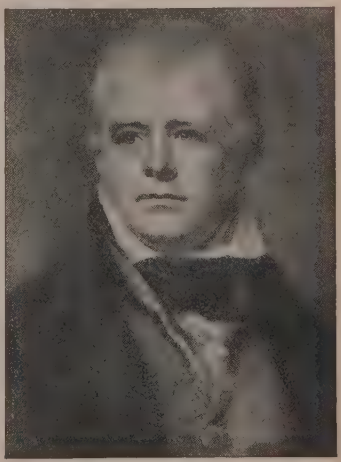
The romantic movement reached its culmination in Sir Walter Scott. The spell wrought upon the reading public by this "Wizard of the North" through his wild tales of adventure in verse and prose established romanticism as the chief inspiring force in nineteenth-century literature. "King of the romantics," he was hailed by his distinguished vassal, Stevenson.

Scott was born in Edinburgh, August 15, 1771, the descendant of a fighting border clan. His father, who appears as Fairford in *Redgauntlet*, was an industrious lawyer who lost clients through extreme honesty. Scott's literary preparation began with the mother's tales from history and tradition. From the first he dearly loved an old song or story, and before he could read he was declaiming ballads. At Sandy Knowe, the grandfather's home, his child-life was nourished with this romantic lore, as described in *Marmion:*—

Education of a Romancer

And ever by the winter hearth
Old tales I heard of woe or mirth.

A childhood illness resulted in permanent lameness, but this did not keep him from the "stone bickers" with the street boys, nor from vigorous and manly sports throughout his life. At seven he went to the high school, where he was "never a dunce, but an incorrigible imp," he says, and studied only what he liked. He would have no Greek, barely tolerated Latin, but read ravenously in fields of military exploit and mediæval history. Later he learned enough German, Italian, and Spanish to supply him with the romantic stories of those languages. At thirteen he was "entranced" with Percy's *Reliques*, and Spenser he "could have read forever." In his gigantic memory he stored every precious bit of legendary lore and "antiquarian old-womanries" that he could find.



SIR WALTER SCOTT

Untouched by the democratic movement of his time, Scott was an uncompromising Tory, largely owing to his adoration of the past. Even in school-days, he says, "I with my head on fire for chivalry was a Cavalier and hated Presbyterians." He studied in the university and prepared for law, from which, however, he was gradually enticed by the attractions of literature. While studying law he experienced his one deep love passion, which came to naught, leaving a faint record in the little poem, *The Violet*, the tenderest verses he ever wrote. Soon after this

From Law to Literature

episode he married the daughter of a French royalist, a woman of sweet and amiable but unintellectual character, incapable of real sympathy with his strong and intense nature, "a bird of paradise mated with an eagle." Their home for several years was at Ashetiel, near storied Yarrow, where most of his poetry was written. He was made sheriff of Selkirkshire, and this position with that of Clerk of the Session and the golden prospects of literature encouraged him to begin, in 1812, his unfortunate castle-building at Abbotsford.

Scott's first appearance as a poet was in 1796 with a translation of the German specter ballad, Bürger's *Lenore*, followed by a version of Goethe's most romantic work, *Goetz von Berlichingen*. In 1800 appeared *The Eve of St. John* and other original ballads. Meanwhile he was gathering materials for the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, published in 1802, with which his fame as an author began. Before he was twelve he had begun a collection of old ballads, and it was long his greatest delight to tramp through Liddesdale, noting down every song and tale that could be extracted from old wives' memories. His genius matured late. He was past thirty when in 1805 the *Lay of the Last Minstrel* appeared, followed in rapid succession by *Marmion*, *Lady of the Lake*, *Rokeby*, and others of less worth. Of these, the *Lay* is the freshest and most spontaneous, written from the very depths of his antiquarian heart; *Marmion* is the most artistic, and the *Lady of the Lake* is most popular.

Scott's Poetry

The success of these poems was an unparalleled event in literary history. For *Marmion* the publisher paid 1,000 guineas before it was written. Here was poetry that entertained, a poetry of action and unaffected expression, a people's poetry built up from the ballad, making a kind of ballad epic or metrical romance. Through a series of exciting adventures the poet rushes with direct and swift pace, seldom diverted into byways of poetic meditation, and in a hurrying, short-lined meter in which we

Character of his Poetry

seem to hear the clattering hoofs of moss-troopers in a border foray. Scott had no ear for music, no delicacy of taste and smell. Similarly, there is a primitive crudeness in his poetry, a certain barrenness like that of the Scotch hills,—no rich musical effects, no subtle shades of feeling, no sudden soul revelations, which distinguish great poetry. But in express-

MELROSE ABBEY

ing universal emotions, especially the passion of patriotism, and in picturing the wild simplicity of life represented by ballads, he is unrivaled. He knew his poetic failings, the thin sentiment, the artistic defects, the "careless glance and reckless rhyme" that offended Ruskin, but his answer to the critics was that he could be only himself:—

> On the wild hill
> Let the wild heath-bell flourish still.

With the appearance of Byron's poems of the same romantic type, but of a more brilliant luster and larger content of thought and emotion, Scott's popularity as a poet declined. Byron

"beat" him, he said frankly, but he had a greater talent in reserve. While hunting for fishing-tackle one day, he came upon the manuscript of a prose tale that he had twice thrown aside. He quickly completed it and in 1814 published anonymously *Waverley*, the first of a series of historical romances the most remarkable the world has ever seen. Success was immediate and marvelous. *Waverley* was followed in rapid succession by *Guy Mannering*, *The Antiquary*, *Old Mortality*, *Rob Roy*, and all the others—thirty novels in about seventeen years, besides innumerable editorial and biographical tasks,—a colossal achievement of creative genius. Scott was now the most famous author in Europe. He established a new school of historical fiction and created the vast modern novel-reading public.

Waverley Novels

The first impressive fact about these novels is the extensive field they cover, more than six hundred years of history, through which Scott moves with perfect ease, writing as if from personal experience in all the centuries. Though he romanticizes history, he makes the old world live again with a vivid realism that serves the highest purpose of history. Like Shakespeare, he writes with a free hand, careless of the exact fact, regardful only for the truth of general impressions of the political and social conditions of an age; and only Shakespeare, too, can paint such portraits as those of James I and Louis XI. The extreme realists, like Howells, decry these novels as fit only to "amuse young people," stucco romances filled with "sham knights and nobles." But even the exacting Leslie Stephen admits that Scott is "the undisputed parent of a whole population full of enduring vitality, reflecting with marvelous charms the characteristics of some of the strongest and sturdiest of the races of men."

Character of the Historical Romance

Pure passion was beyond Scott's reach, and his grasp upon moral and spiritual forces of character was weak. He had little power of analysis. His heroes that are created for purposes

of the plot are lifeless and uninteresting. His women are generally vapid and useless creatures, resembling at best pretty miniatures. He could never, like Jane Austen, command the delicate touch that makes the commonplace interesting; as he said, with some truth, he could do only the "big bow-wow strain." In daily life he was a lover of robust and open-air sports, and in his fictions he confessed to a "propensity for the dubious characters of borderers, buccaneers, highland robbers, and all others of a Robin Hood description." Critics make merry with his careless style, loose-jointed plots, tedious digressions, the ponderous pleasantries of his introductions, the artificial speech of his heroes and heroines. Carlyle complained that the novels "do not found themselves on deep interests," that is, they do not contain a message or definite moral purpose.

Scott's Limitations

To all this Scott would have said, "A man canna do the thing he canna do." He always wrote extempore, and at a furious pace. He was neither artist nor philosopher, but simply a teller of tales, which bear their message of honor, courage, patriotism, and manly and heroic deeds, expressed in a manner that is as wholesome and pure as a Scotch burn glinting among the birches. His purpose was "to furnish harmless amusement," he said, "to relieve anxiety of mind, to unwrinkle a brow bent with the furrows of daily toil," and, perchance, "to induce an idler to study the history of his country."

The finest of the Waverley novels are those dealing with Scotch history and scenery, for Scott was at his best when writing of "my ain countree." With love and enthusiasm he paints Scotch life, its heroisms and humilities, its canny intellect, militant religion, quaint speech, pungent humor and pathos, and background of wild natural beauty. Readers generally agree with Tennyson in regarding *Old Mortality* as "his greatest novel." For Scotch social history of about 1730, *The Heart of Midlothian*, with its "matchless character of Jennie Deans," in Lang's judgment, is

The Scotch Novels

"unrivaled." The *Bride of Lammermoor*, a tragic drama in prose, Gladstone declared could not have been written by any other since Æschylus. In *Ivanhoe*, and in *Kenilworth*, the English scene is painted, with less of loving fidelity but with no less of romantic charm. The period of Louis XI of France is vividly reproduced in *Quentin Durward*, and from *The Talisman* thousands of readers have obtained their chief knowledge of the Crusades.

English and French Novels

Abbotsford was Scott's unwise but not unworthy ambition. He was proud, and his pride was shaped by aristocratic precedents.

SCOTT'S HOME AT ABBOTSFORD

He had become a knight by gift of the worthless George IV, to whom he professed a sincere fealty; and he wished to found a family of Scotts of Abbotsford, and realize in this lordly demesne the feudal conception of life which captivated his imagination. In building and planting he spent vast sums of money, much of it before it was earned. To enlarge his income he became a secret partner in the printing firm of the Ballantine brothers, whose

Abbotsford and Bankruptcy

business incompetency he did not understand. In 1826 the firm failed for £117,000, and Scott assumed the debt as his own. He might have taken advantage of the bankruptcy law, but chose the way of strict honor, and with unquailing courage undertook the Herculean task of earning the full sum with his pen.

In five years he paid off £63,000. The terrible strain could not be endured, yet after a second stroke of paralysis he worked on with indomitable will. A trip to the Mediterranean was undertaken, and the British government placed a ship at his service. But the decline continued. At Naples news of the death of Goethe reached him and he exclaimed, "He at least died at home. Let us to Abbotsford." He reached home barely able to recognize the dear scenes. Over his happy dogs "he alternately sobbed and smiled till sleep overcame him." On September 21, 1832, he died, and was buried among the ruins of Dryburgh Abbey. The debt of honor was paid with his life. By the sale of copyrights the creditors were satisfied and Abbotsford was saved. And to-day it stands as the monument of his joys and his blasted hopes, its walls hung with ancient armor sanctified by his love, the books in the great library and the writing-desk as he left them, the case of precious keepsakes in the oriel window where he listened to the rippling Tweed that skirts the lawn—a place of sacred silence and pathos, which the visitor can hardly leave without tears.

The End of a Noble Struggle

The picture of Scott that we get from Lockhart's *Life of Scott*, one of the richest biographies in the language, is that of a large, sincere, and lovable nature, radiant with humor and good cheer; of a life of prodigious labor, devoted enthusiasms, pure ideals, and unbounded benevolence,—a happy life crushed out by a duty nobly assumed and faithfully executed; of a genius almost Shakespearian in amplitude. "The whole world's darling," Wordsworth called him. He was adored by his family,

Character and Fame

THE SCOTT MONUMENT IN EDINBURGH

loved by all men, and animals as well — the pride of Scotland, the gracious friend of humanity. In the broad range and marvelous energy of his creative imagination, Palgrave and others would place him "second to Shakespeare." Whatever his rank, among the great ones he wears a crown.

The Romantic Essayists

While the transformation of poetry was going on under the romantic influence, a similar transformation of prose was in progress. The artistic possibilities of prose, hardly suspected in the preceding century, except by Burke, were discovered, and prose began to assume some of the qualities of poetry. Its first development was in literary criticism. Formerly bound by ancient authority, criticism now became independent and individual, and was raised to the importance of a distinct literary type. The

The Scotch Reviewers

great reviews were established, the *Edinburgh* in 1802, the *Quarterly* in 1809, and *Blackwood's Magazine* in 1817. The editors and chief contributors were Francis Jeffrey, the "thunderer," William Gifford, the satirist, John Gibson Lockhart, who was Scott's son-in-law and biographer, and John Wilson or "Christopher North," author of the critical, humorous, and hilarious *Noctes Ambrosianæ*.

They were powerful writers, able to create or destroy a reputation with a single article, omniscient and arrogant in their tone, dogmatic and perverse in their judgments. Their criticism was of the destructive, "slashing" kind, the duty of the critic being, in their conception, to chastise faults rather than to praise merits. Young writers were treated like prisoners at the bar, condemned without recommendation to mercy, ridiculed, beaten with a bludgeon of abusive epithets, and peremptorily told to go and sin no more. Political rancor often determined the judgments; a Whig or Radical author was pretty sure to be flayed by the Tory critics, whatever might be his merits. They were generally hostile to romantic poetry; being incompetent to understand it, especially in its mystical and spiritual aspects, they denounced it. Jeffrey could see in Wordsworth's lyrics only "stuff about dancing daffodils," and pronounced the immortal ode "illegible and unintelligible." Lockhart disposed of Keats's *Endymion* as "drivelling idiocy." Literature suffered under this severe discipline, but it also profited, especially in the restraint exercised by the critics upon the eccentric and sentimental tendencies of romanticism.

Destructive Criticism

Another group of critics, representing the romantic ideals, was the London coterie of Lamb, Hazlitt, Leigh Hunt, and their friends Shelley, Keats, and the painter Haydon. They were dubbed by the reviewers the "Cockney School," and described as "uneducated and flimsy striplings, fanciful dreaming tea-drinkers." The "chief doctor and professor" of this school, according to *Blackwood's*, was

Leigh Hunt, 1784–1859

Leigh Hunt, who as poet and essayist was one of the most popular authors of the period, the friend of everybody, even of the crabbed Carlyle. He was founder and editor of the *Examiner*, one of London's great newspapers, a brisk journalist, and an audacious fighter for the Liberal cause. For stating the plain fact that the Prince Regent was "not an Adonis in loveliness, but a corpulent man of fifty," he got himself into prison for two years.

An incidental but important result of the exploring spirit of the romantics was the revival of interest in Dante. In 1814 Henry Francis Cary brought out a blank-verse translation of the *Divine Comedy* that is still the most popular representative of the great Florentine. The first original product inspired by Dante in England was Hunt's *Story of Rimini*, an expanded version of the Paolo and Francesca episode, in a fluent and colloquial form of verse that influenced the early work of Keats. Hunt was to Charles Lamb "incomparable as a fireside companion," and such he still is for leisurely pleasure in almost any of his many books, *A Jar of Honey from Mount Hybla*, *Wishing-Cap Papers*, or *Men, Women, and Books*. He wrote with a chatty, familiar style that is always blossoming into pretty flowers of rhetoric and fopperies of sentiment; the "deliciousness" of everything bright and beautiful is somewhat cloying, but always relieved by a spirit of wholesome gladness. "Sweet Master Shallow," some Tory wit called him, and this has been too generally accepted as a fair epitome of his qualities.

Hunt's Literary Fame

William Hazlitt was an ardent literary radical who, owing to an uncompanionable temper, was as generally disliked as Lamb was liked, but who was acknowledged to be the most awakening and influential critic of the period. His enthusiasm for pre-Augustan literature, represented by his *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays* and *Lectures on the Dramatic Literature of the Age of Elizabeth*, was an important contribution to the revolution in literary taste.

William Hazlitt, 1778–1830

His best work is *The Spirit of the Age*, containing portraits of contemporary authors and public men. More widely entertaining are *Table Talk* and *The Round Table*. His opinions are sturdily independent, supported always by wide reading and clear thinking. The style is brilliant and incisive, enlivened by epigram and caustic irony, rising at times to the eloquence of Burke, whose disciple he professed himself. Like a versatile journalist, he wrote in a desultory way on everything, —*On Taste, On Respectable People, On Going a Journey, On Trifles Light as Air;* but he made literature of all he wrote. He could justly say: "I have written no commonplace."

Charles Lamb

1775–1834

The work of these essayists combined the criticism of literature and the criticism of life. The greatest of them in the exercise of this double function was Charles Lamb, the infinitely patient, infinitely humorous, gentle, incomparable "Elia."

Charles Lamb was born in Crown Office Row, in the Temple, where he spent the first seven years of his life. His father was a barrister's clerk, "a man of incorrigible and losing honesty," as described in the character of Lovel in the *Old Benchers of the Inner Temple*. From seven to fourteen Charles Lamb was a charity boy in blue coat and yellow stockings in Christ's Hospital, where his lifelong friendship with Coleridge began. His school life is described in the essay, *Recollections of Christ's Hospital*, and its sequel, *Christ's Hospital Five and Thirty Years Ago*. He was not so forlorn as the dreamy boy from Ottery St. Mary, for his home was near and he could frequently enjoy tea and hot rolls while his mates were "battening upon their quarter of a penny loaf, moistened with attenuated small-beer, in wooden

School and Counting-house

piggins." An impediment of speech precluded a university and professional career; so he obtained a clerkship in the East India House and there he toiled steadily—"served the Philistines," he said—for thirty-three years. In 1825 he was retired on a pension; his peculiar sensations of freedom are described in *The Superannuated Man.*

In 1796 occurred the calamity that determined the course of his life and left a deep strain of tragic horror. There was a hereditary taint of insanity in the family. The sister Mary, in a paroxysm of madness, killed her mother. She recovered her sanity in an asylum, but was always subject to recurrences of the malady. From the age of twenty-one Lamb sacrificed himself for this sister, permitting himself no relationship that might supplant her in his duties and affections. In their life of "dual loneliness" they felt the pinch of poverty, but generally, as he says, "the wind was tempered to the shorn Lambs," and on the whole they enjoyed much that was cheerful and beautiful. In the little parlor in Inner Temple Lane or in Great Russell Street on Wednesday evenings the Lambs kept open house. There the sprightliest wits gathered, including Wordsworth and Coleridge when they were in town, and reveled in discussions of the vanities and sublimities of art, literature, and society. On the sideboard was always a bit of cold beef and a can of porter to which each guest helped himself. What sweetness Lamb found in life was derived from his books and his friendships. He died murmuring the names of his best friends.

Domestic Life and Sorrow

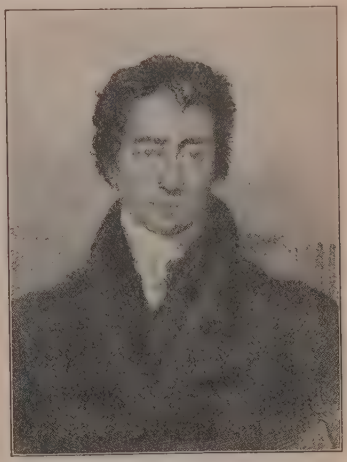
Three pictures would illustrate Lamb's biography: first, the book-lover late at night poring over the precious old folio of Beaumont and Fletcher's plays, which he and "Bridget Elia" had "eyed for weeks before we could make up our minds to the purchase"; second, the witty punster on a Wednesday evening stammering out his piquant comments and humorous contortions of wise thought, amid roars of friendly laughter; and, third, the brother and

Three Pictures

sister walking silently, hand in hand, with tearful eyes, across the fields to the asylum at Hoxton.

Lamb's portrait has been drawn by many friends—a small man with large head, long melancholy face, keen and penetrating eyes, a "bland smile with a touch of sadness in it," and a small body dwindling away in smaller legs. He was shy and never at ease except with friends of kindred tastes. He loved the London streets, and cared little for the country. He anticipated Dickens in a sympathetic interest in hungry children, odd and grotesque characters, and bankrupts of fortune. He was mildly intemperate, keeping, as he expressed it, "a little on this side of abstemiousness"; indulgence in wine and in puns are the only weaknesses for which he was ever reproached. All friends testify to his gentleness, goodness, and noble endurance of tribulation, which he concealed by the humor that was his abiding refuge from sorrow.

Personality



CHARLES LAMB

Lamb first appeared in public as a poet, with four sonnets in Coleridge's first volume of poems, published in 1796. A sad little romance, *Rosamond Gray*, written in the manner of Richardson, with many touches of personal revelation, won a moderate success. A poetical drama, *John Woodvil*, redolent of Elizabethan plays, and a comedy, *Mr. H—*, were failures. His discursive genius could not work under the restraints of poetic ex-

Early Literary Experiments

pression. Neither could it work under compulsion. To add to his meager income, for a time he contributed to the newspapers six jokes a day at sixpence each. Probably he would not have done much better, had he attempted to write for regular wages. Literature was his recreation, not his profession. Jointly with his sister he wrote the *Tales from Shakespeare*, one of the best of juvenile classics. In 1808 appeared the *Specimens of English Dramatic Poets*, with notes of luminous insight that placed him in the first rank of critics. With this book, three years before Coleridge and Hazlitt lectured on Shakespeare, modern study and appreciation of the lesser Elizabethan dramatists began.

But Lamb is known almost entirely through the *Essays of Elia*, contributed to the *London Magazine* and collected in 1823, with a second volume, *Last Essays of Elia*, in 1833.

Essays of Elia

These inimitable essays, upon the simplest topics of daily experience, chosen, it would seem, by accident rather than by design, are a perpetual feast of frolicsome humor, tender pathos, and compassionate humanity. The very titles reveal the author's merry freakishness: *The Two Races of Men*, that is, borrowers and lenders; *A Chapter on Ears*, celebrating the fact that the author had no ear—for music; *Imperfect Sympathies*, especially with Scotchmen, whom he has "been trying all his life to like"; *Mrs. Battle's Opinions on Whist*, whose fundamental principles were "a clear fire, a clean hearth, and the rigor of the game"; and *A Complaint of the Decay of Beggars*, a defense of the "oldest and honorablest form of pauperism." From such essays it is difficult to choose; each one is a new delight. The *Dissertation on Roast Pig* is the extreme of whimsical humor, and *Dream Children* is the perfect expression of gentle pathos.

There is no philosophy in *Elia*, no solicitude for the reforms of the hour. But there is always a lesson. As Pater suggests: "Unoccupied as he might seem with great matters, he is in immediate contact with what is real, especially in its caressing

littleness, that littleness in which there is much of the whole woeful heart of things." The essays are frankly autobiographic, hardly less so than the charming *Letters*. Lamb is constantly talking about himself, bringing in all his relatives, but entirely without egotism or vanity. He is fond of mystifying readers with sly tricks of a disguise that is easily penetrated. Preëminently the style is the man. Indifferent to the laws of form, he loses sight of his theme in endless digressions, and rambles aimlessly in self-pleasing reminiscence; but the result is an engaging blend of naturalness and delicately finished art. The language is old-fashioned, like his own old-fashioned figure in dingy black and knee-breeches, after long trousers had come in; it savors of the old authors whom he dearly loved, Burton, Walton, Fuller, Sir Thomas Browne. The antique and quaint features, however, are not imitations, but genuine distillations from his own nature that found its true kinships in the past. He preserves the best traditions of Addison and Steele and reminds us of Goldsmith, but his charm is all his own. *Elia* is unique.

Qualities of the Essays

Thomas De Quincey

1785–1859

More romantic and more eccentric than Lamb was Thomas De Quincey, the "English Opium-Eater," inventor of "impassioned prose" and revealer of beauties in the English language hitherto unsuspected.

De Quincey was born in Manchester in 1785, the son of a prosperous merchant. From the first there was something almost uncanny about the precocious lad. He seemed destined to make a strange adventure of life. He was diminutive in figure, shy and sensitive in disposition, and wholly occupied with books and day dreams. Before he was fifteen he could write and speak

A Youthful Prodigy

Greek and compose lyric poems in both Greek and Latin. Because the instruction was dull and useless, he ran away from school, spent several months of vagrancy in Wales among shepherds, charcoal-burners, and gipsies, and then hid himself in the wilderness of London. After a year of mysterious adventure and suffering he was discovered by friends and sent to Oxford, which he left without a degree because of a sudden terror of examinations.

Attracted to the Lake region by his admiration for Wordsworth, he settled in the little Grasmere cottage that had been the poet's first home, married a dalesman's daughter, and surrendered his life to the opium fiend. He had first used the insidious drug at Oxford to allay the pains of neuralgia, and was never afterwards entirely free from it. The habit grew upon him until his will was completely paralyzed, and reading and dreaming became his sole occupation. Finally, aroused by the loss of his property, he partly subdued his enemy and engaged in productive literary work. In 1821 the *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* appeared in the *London Magazine*, and he was at once famous. An engagement with *Blackwood's* led him to remove, in 1830, to Edinburgh, where he died in 1859.

The Life of an Opium-Eater

The eccentric appearance and habits of De Quincey have been a prolific source of anecdote. He slept while others worked, was a great walker, preferring night rambles, and was as picturesquely incompetent in financial matters as Goldsmith. He once stopped at John Wilson's to escape a shower and remained nearly a year. He avoided society, but when captured—usually by stratagem—for an evening at the tables of the great, his conversation was as wonderful as that of Coleridge or Macaulay. Those who heard him spoke of "the magic of his talk, its sweet and subtle ripples of anecdote and suggestion, its witching splendor when he rose to his height."

Personal Habits

Multifariousness is the first impression of De Quincey's

work as a whole. All of his best writings, about one hundred and fifty articles, appeared in magazines. They include a remarkable variety of topics and represent vast accumulations of knowledge, drawn often from the remotest sources. He was deeply read in German metaphysics, wrote on philosophy, theology, political economy, Greek poetry, Roman history, Goethe, Shakespeare, Milton. His *Literary Reminiscences* contain valuable studies of his contemporaries. His power of vivid description is seen in the *Flight of a Tartar Tribe* and *Three Memorable Murders*, and the gruesome humor of the essay on *Murder as One of the Fine Arts* is without a parallel. But the choicest portions of his work are the *Confessions*, its sequel, *Suspiria de Profundis*, and the *English Mail-Coach*. The first of the *Suspiria*, "Levana and Our Ladies of Sorrow," is "one of the most magnificent pieces of prose," says Masson, "in the English or any other language."

Extent and Variety of his Work

THOMAS DE QUINCEY

The purpose of De Quincey was to add to the domain of prose some of the realms conceded exclusively to verse. He aimed to make language express thought, emotion, and passion by the sound as well as by the meaning of words, by rhythmic melody, as thought and emotion are expressed by music. The result of his experiments is a kind of prose-lyric, or "impassioned prose," as he named it. He takes advantage of the musical possibilities of a

A New Form of English Prose

theme, as Ruskin does of the color elements. Language exercises a new function, thrills by a direct sensuous appeal, like the appeal of harp strings or organ pipes. He expresses best in this manner the tender emotions of melancholy and profound revery, the awe-struck sense of vastness, and the impalpable substance of dream phantasies. The language is highly Latinized and melodious, as in the grand triumphal close of the *Dream-Fugue:*—

> Then was completed the passion of the mighty fugue. The golden tubes of the organ, which as yet had but muttered at intervals—gleaming amongst clouds and surges of incense—threw up, as from fountains unfathomable, columns of heart-shattering music. Choir and anti-choir were filling fast with unknown voices. Thou also, Dying Trumpeter, with thy love that was victorious, and thy anguish that was finishing, didst enter the tumult; trumpet and echo—farewell love, and farewell anguish—rang through the dreadful sanctus.

De Quincey distinguished sharply between his "impassioned prose" and his ordinary prose, which is full of stylistic extremes and surprises. His two prevailing faults are diffuseness and triviality. The sturdiest patience is tried by his irrelevant trifles. And his comic features are introduced often with a taste so questionable as to be unaccountable. But one tolerates his pages of freakishness for the sake of his purple patches, which are, as Leslie Stephen grudgingly admits, "almost irreproachable, and may be read and re-read with increasing delight. I know of no other modern author who has soared into the same regions with so uniform and easy a flight."

De Quincey's Faults of Style

PROGRAM OF WORK

CLASS READING AND STUDY. WORDSWORTH: *Expostulation and Reply; The Tables Turned; Lines Written in Early Spring; A Poet's Epitaph; Lucy Gray; Lucy,* I, II, III; *She Was a Phantom of Delight; Yew Trees; Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey; To a Highland Girl; The Solitary Reaper; To the Cuckoo; To a Skylark; We Are Seven; Yarrow Unvisited; The Daffodils;*

At the Grave of Burns; Ode to Duty; My Heart Leaps Up; Ode on the Intimations of Immortality; Michael; Laodamia; From *The Recluse* (On Man, on Nature, etc.). Sonnets: *On the Beach at Calais; Composed on Westminster Bridge; Milton; The World is too much with us; On the Departure of Sir Walter Scott; On the Sonnet.* Criticism: Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* (Century).

COLERIDGE: *The Ancient Mariner; Christabel,* pt. I; *Kubla Khan; Æolian Harp; Frost at Midnight; Dejection: An Ode; Youth and Age; Sonnet: To the River Otter; France: An Ode; Work Without Hope.* Criticism: *Biographia Literaria,* ch. xiv (Manly, Century).

SOUTHEY: *Battle of Blenheim; The Holly Tree; Stanzas Written in his Library.*

JANE AUSTEN: *Pride and Prejudice,*—entire, or chs. i–vi (Manly).

SCOTT: *Lay of the Last Minstrel; Lochinvar; Proud Maisie; Bonny Dundee; County Guy; Jock o' Hazeldean;* Christmas (*Marmion,* Introduction to Canto VI); Fitzjames and Roderick Dhu (*Lady of the Lake,* Canto V, 8–16); Edmund's Song (*Rokeby*); *The Violet.*

Every educated person is supposed to have read *Old Mortality, Ivanhoe, Heart of Midlothian, Kenilworth,* and *The Talisman.*

LEIGH HUNT: *Men, Women and Books:* The World of Books, Inside of an Omnibus; *Wishing-Cap Papers:* Piccadilly and the West End, the Valley of Ladies, Love in the Country; *A Day by the Fire:* A Rainy Day, On Talking Nonsense.

HAZLITT: *Table Talk:* On Going a Journey, On the Ignorance of the Learned, On Reading Old Books; *Round Table:* On Manner, On Pedantry, Character of John Bull; *Spirit of the Age:* Lord Byron, Mr. Coleridge (Manly).

LAMB: The Two Races of Men; A Chapter on Ears; Imperfect Sympathies; Mrs. Battle's Opinions on Whist; Dream Children; Old Familiar Faces; Mackery End in Hertfordshire; A Dissertation on Roast Pig.

DE QUINCEY: *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* (Manly, Century); *Suspiria de Profundis:* Levana and Our Ladies of Sorrow; Murder as a Fine Art; The Vision of Sudden Death; Dream-Fugue.

LITERARY HISTORY AND CRITICISM. Herford's *Age of Wordsworth;* Hancock's *French Revolution and the English Poets;* Brandes's *Main Currents in Nineteenth-Century Literature,* vol. IV; Rawnsley's *Literary Associations of the English Lakes;* Rannie's *Wordsworth and his Circle;* Beers's *History of Romanticism in the Nineteenth Century;* Cambridge, vol. XI, chs. v, vi (Wordsworth, Coleridge); Walker's *English Essay and Essayists;* Stevenson's *Early Reviews of Great Writers;* Stephen's *Hours in a Library* (Scott, De Quincey, Wordsworth, Coleridge); Payne's *Greater*

English Poets of the Nineteenth Century; Bradley's *Oxford Lectures on English Poetry* (Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats); Masson's *Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats and other Essays;* More's *Shelburne Essays*, Second Series (Lamb, Hazlitt); Gates's *Studies and Appreciations* (Wordsworth, Coleridge, Scott, Byron, Shelley, Keats); Woodberry's *Makers of Literature* (Coleridge, Shelley, Byron, Lamb, Landor); Pater's *Appreciations* (Wordsworth, Coleridge, Lamb); Winchester's *A Group of English Essayists.*

Myers's *Wordsworth* (E. M. L.); Raleigh's *Wordsworth;* Knight's *Wordsworth;* Morley's Globe Edition; Arnold's *Selections* (G. T. S.); Robertson's *Wordsworthshire;* George's *Wordsworth's Prefaces;* Lowell's *Essays;* Church's *Dante and Other Essays;* Hutton's *Literary Essays;* Arnold's *Essays in Criticism*, Second Series; Lee's *Dorothy Wordsworth;* Knight's *Journals of Dorothy Wordsworth;* Burroughs's *Fresh Fields.*

Campbell's *Coleridge;* Traill's *Coleridge* (E. M. L.); Caine's *Coleridge* (G. W.); Garnett's *Coleridge;* Campbell's Globe Edition; Beers's *Prose Selections* (English Readings); George's *Principles of Criticism from the Biographia Literaria;* Cottle's *Reminiscences of Coleridge and Southey;* Carlyle's *Life of Sterling*, ch. viii; Brandl's *Coleridge and the English Romantic Movement;* De Quincey's *Essay on Coleridge and Opium-Eating;* Brooke's *Theology in the English Poets* (Coleridge, Wordsworth); Shairp's *Studies in Poetry and Philosophy* (Wordsworth, Coleridge); Watson's *Excursions in Criticism;* Dowden's *New Studies in Literature;* Dowden's *Southey* (E. M. L.).

Smith's *Jane Austen* (G. W.); Austen-Leigh's *Jane Austen;* Mitton's *Jane Austen and her Times;* Howells's *Heroines of Fiction;* Hutton's *Scott* (E. M. L.); Lang's *Scott;* Lockhart's *Life of Scott;* Palgrave's Globe Edition of the Poems; Olcott's *Country of Sir Walter Scott;* Douglas's *Scott's Journal;* Bagehot's *Literary Studies;* Irving's *Abbotsford and Newstead Abbey;* Swinburne's *Studies in Prose and Poetry;* Burton's *Masters of the English Novel.*

Monkhouse's *Hunt* (G. W.); *Autobiography* of Leigh Hunt; Mrs. Fields's *A Shelf of Old Books;* Selected Essays of Hunt (Camelot Series); Birrell's *Hazlitt* (E. M. L.); Selected Essays of Hazlitt (Temple Classics, Camelot Series); Ainger's *Lamb* (E. M. L.); Lucas's *Lamb;* Talfourd's *Memoirs of Charles Lamb;* Gilchrist's *Mary Lamb* (Famous Women); Birrell's *Obiter Dicta*, Second Series, and *Res Judicatæ;* De Quincey's *Literary Reminiscences;* Masson's *De Quincey* (E. M. L.); Findlay's *Personal Recollections of De Quincey;* Turk's *Selections* (Athenæum); Japp's *Life and Writings of De Quincey;* Stephen's *Hours in a Library*, vol. I.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION AND RESEARCH

1. Fundamental ideas of the French Revolution. 2. An account of Wordsworth's experiences in France (consult *Prelude*, IX, X). 3. Obtain from the Prefaces a full explanation of Wordsworth's ideas of poetic reform. 4. Objections to the use of simple language. Did he follow his own rule?

5. Make a map of Wordsworthshire, indicating points of literary interest. 6. Why is *Lucy Gray* a success and *Goody Blake* a failure? 7. Testimony to the sister's influence (*To my Sister*, *Sparrow's Nest*, *Tintern Abbey*, *To a Butterfly*, *Prelude* XI: "Thanks to the bounteous Giver," etc.).

8. Coleridge at school (consult Lamb's *Essays*). 9. Point out elements of the old balladry in the *Ancient Mariner*. 10. Coleridge says: "I have a smack of Hamlet myself." Complete the comparison. 11. Coleridge as a talker.

12. Read a few chapters of the *Mysteries of Udolpho* and report the result. 13. A comparison of Jane Austen and W. D. Howells. 14. Show in detail the contrast between Jane Austen and Scott.

15. Exactly what are Scott's merits as a poet? 16. Origin and character of Scott's poetic feeling (*Marmion*, Introduction to Canto III). 17. The story of Scott's financial misfortune (Stephen's *Studies of a Biographer*). 18. Obtain from Lockhart an account of Scott's illness and death.

19. Discuss the proper function of criticism. 20. Illustrate the "scalping-knife criticism" of the early reviews (Stevenson; *Edinburgh Review*, November, 1814; *Blackwood's* October and November, 1817; August, 1818). 21. Compare Lamb as a humorist with Addison and Goldsmith. 22. Compare De Quincey's realistic prose with his impassioned prose (Three Memorable Murders and the Dream-Fugue).

CHAPTER XVII

THE POST-REVOLUTION POETS

1812–1837

The earlier features of the Revolution are represented by Wordsworth, Southey, and Coleridge, who afterwards, recoiling from its violence, settled back into political conservatism and contented themselves with poetic and philosophic revolt. Byron and Shelley represent the later and more permanent influences of the Revolution, the forces of moral and spiritual revolt, the protest against the tyranny of social custom, against religious bigotry and intolerance, and the assertion of a larger freedom of thought and conduct. Both were champions of liberty, but Shelley's spirit was unselfish and philanthropic, while Byron's was sordid and misanthropic. Shelley represents the constructive aspects and the loftiest ideals of the Revolution; Byron represents the natural fruits of its lawless and destructive individualism. This is one reason why Shelley's fame has increased as Byron's has diminished. "The sun has extinguished the glowworm," said Shelley, modestly comparing himself with Byron; but to-day the beneficent light of the glowworm is more effectual than the fading light of the sun.

The New Liberty of Byron and Shelley

George Gordon, Lord Byron

1788–1824

The most available apology for the unseemly life of Lord Byron has always been his heritage of violence in the blood.

A granduncle was known as "the wicked Lord Byron"; his grandfather was a sea-rover, passing among sailors as "foul-weather Jack"; his father was a dissolute captain of the guards, called "mad Jack," who married a Scotch heiress, squandered her fortune, and fled from the country to escape his creditors. The mother was proud, passionate, and hysterical, and died in a fit of rage over an upholsterer's bill. The ill-starred poet was born in London in 1788, the year before the outbreak of the French Revolution. He was educated at Harrow and Cambridge, where he was more distinguished for boxing, swimming, and horsemanship than for scholarship. A slight deformity in one foot which somewhat limited his sports was a source of lifelong and painful self-consciousness. Though rebellious toward all scholastic routine, he acquired a knowledge of history, romance, and classical literature sufficient for the uses of a poet. At ten years of age he became a lord, and thereafter never for a moment forgot it, or permitted others to forget it. The title carried with it the ancestral seat of Newstead Abbey. He was early given to "riot most uncouth"—the companionship of "flaunting wassailers of high and low degree," and a fondness for outraging the proprieties; at college he kept a tame bear.

Heritage and Youth

LORD BYRON

While at Cambridge he published, in 1807, *Hours of Idleness*, a collection of juvenile poems of slender merit. Already in this volume the poet affects the pose of misanthropy, "weary of

love, of life," boasting himself "a perfect Timon, not nineteen." The *Edinburgh Review* with cruel glee exposed the weakness of the poems, and Byron, smarting for the first time under the whip of criticism, retaliated with *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, in which he lashed his fellow-craftsmen in letters with stinging blows that fell alike upon the just and the unjust. It was uncritical but clever, revealing the first promise of the poet's real power, and it has remained an alluring model for literary satirists.

Early Poetry

Reaching his majority in 1809, Byron took his seat in the House of Lords, celebrated the event with high revels at Newstead, and set out upon his continental travels. He visited Spain, Portugal, Malta, Albania, Turkey, and Greece, residing several months in Athens. At the end of two years he returned to England in a mood of weary satiety, "almost without a desire," bringing "some 4000 lines of one kind or another," written during his travels. The first two cantos of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* were published, and Byron "awoke one morning to find himself famous." The poem presented a new type of romantic sensation and the public was delighted. Scott's highland chieftains were neglected for this melancholy pilgrim, whose identity with the poet was readily guessed. Stimulated by this success, Byron poured forth with astonishing fluency his romantic tales, the *Giaour*, *Corsair*, *Lara*, and the others, a brilliant display of literary sky-rockets such as England had never before witnessed.

Childe Harold's Pilgrimage

Byron was now the hero of the hour, the pet of fashionable society, "the world's new joy." In a single day 14,000 copies of his *Corsair* were sold. Women worshiped him with blind infatuation and young men appeared with open shirt collars, imagined themselves Laras, and posed as men of loneliness and mystery, sated with life's pleasures and sins. In the midst of social revelry, Byron suddenly married Miss Milbanke, apparently with the hope of

The Idol of Society

aid in his persistent financial difficulties. Within a year Lady Byron left him, and the mystery surrounding the event was a prolific source of scandal. Justly or unjustly, society turned against Byron, and adulation was changed to execration. The suspicion now ripened to a conviction that he was too closely identified with his Laras and Corsairs, "men of one virtue and a thousand crimes," to be tolerated by English respectability. So the curtain was rung down upon the Byronic farce, which for four years had been an absorbing entertainment.

With a mingling of sorrow and vindictive rage, "bankrupt in purse and heart," Byron left England in 1816, never to return. Under the more generous skies of Italy he sought a refuge—

> From the loud roar of foaming calumny.

Here his brother exile, Shelley, was often his companion, and, though repelled by his worldliness, always his faithful friend.

Exile and Heroic Death

The story of the remaining eight years of Byron's life reads like one of his romances of lawless adventure. In Venice he long resided, then in Ravenna, Pisa, and Genoa, leading a life singularly compounded of profligacy and poetry. But there was a latent spark of genuine nobility in his nature, which was fanned to a flame by the Greek struggle for liberty. He had long been a sham hero; now he determined to be a real hero. Besides, life's cup of pleasure had been drunk to the dregs, and at thirty-six he was sighing, "My days are in the yellow leaf." He raised a large fund for the Greek cause, went to Greece, became a leader of the revolution, labored devotedly for nearly a year, and died of fever at Missolonghi, in 1824.

Of Byron's transcendent genius there is no question, but he was without character to sustain it, and so his poet soul drifted aimlessly, finding no anchorage in great ideals and purposes. His personality, brilliant and generous, rebellious toward all restraint and volcanic in its passions, exercised a kind of malign

fascination. His "resplendent genius," says the historian Parkman, "achieved no more signal triumph than that of half-beguiling us to forget the unmanly character of its possessor." He could compel admiration, but could not win love. His nature was composed of irreconcilable extremes. With an imperious pride that was easily affronted by trifles, he affected to scorn society and the world; a violent aristocrat, he professed the principles of democracy; he cursed England, yet implored the fates not to lay "my ashes in a soil which is not mine"; he held women in contempt as "inferior creatures," yet confessed himself to be "constantly the slave of one of them"; he flouted religion, yet wrote the *Hebrew Melodies* and in his profoundest poem, *Cain*, grappled with the problem of original sin in emulation of Milton; he maintained that Pope is "the greatest name in our poetry," yet wrote all of his own poetry in violation of Pope's principles of art.

Brilliant and Paradoxical Character

His enormous egotism is offensive, and his sincerity is always questionable. His confessions are not convincing; his moods and passions seem theatrical and spectacular. He is a sentimental poseur, parading his melancholy to show how beautifully a noble lord can suffer, and is proud of being the most unhappy man in Europe. His dramas were unsuccessful because he could depict but one character—himself; his heroes, Childe Harold, Lara, Manfred, Don Juan, were all created in his own image. His poetry is all autobiography, and often an indecently frank revelation of himself. Now that the glamour of the man is gone, he wearies readers with the perpetual exhibition of his self-indulgence and self-pity, bearing—

Egotism and Affectation

> Through Europe to the Ægean shore
> The pageant of his bleeding heart.

Byron lacked manliness; he nursed his weaknesses as if they were virtues, filled his poems with lyrical whining about "lone-

liness" that was inflicted by his own conduct, and shifted to his ancestors the responsibility for his sins. "My springs of life were poisoned," he said, and he went through life drinking the poison as if it were on the whole a rather delicious beverage.

Nearly all of Byron's best poetry was produced during the exile of seven years in Italy. The *Prisoner of Chillon*, in romantic and artistic interest, is superior to the long tales. The third and fourth cantos of *Childe Harold* are richer and more dignified than the preceding cantos. The dramatic poem, *Manfred*, called by Taine the "twin brother of Goethe's *Faust*," is an embodiment of the poet's own defiant spirit, battling with remorse for some mysterious crime, clothed in a rhetoric that wavers between magnificence and mere grandiloquence. The last and longest poem, *Don Juan*, is an epic of moral enfranchisement of which Byron, with his affectations stripped off, is the hero. His lyrics should have been the most natural expression of his intemperate emotions, but only a few are perfect, like the *Maid of Athens*, *She Walks in Beauty*, and the tender evening hymn *Ave Maria*. Byron lacked the inherent delicacy of spirit required for this form of poetry; as Nichol puts it, he "was too much of the earth earthy to be a great lyrist."

Principal Poems

In *Childe Harold* Byron is most satisfactory as a poet. The pensive wanderer is inspired by the grandeur of Alpine scenery, and by spots made sacred by literary associations, and is lifted to true poetic exaltation when contemplating the relics and faded glories of ancient civilizations—Italy, "mother of arts, as once of arms," possessing still "the fatal gift of beauty"—

A Master of Descriptive Poetry

> Thy very weeds are beautiful, thy waste
> More rich than other climes' fertility;
> Thy wreck a glory, and thy ruin graced
> With an immaculate charm which cannot be defaced;

Venice, "ruler of the waters," whose "daughters had their

dowers from spoils of nations"; Rome, "lone mother of dead empires"—

> The Niobe of nations! there she stands,
> Childless and crownless in her voiceless woe;
> An empty urn within her withered hands,
> Whose holy dust was scattered long ago.

In *Childe Harold* is some of the finest descriptive poetry in the language. The address to the ocean with which it closes is unsurpassed. No other English poet has equaled Byron in exalted appreciation of the ruined grandeur of the ancient world, bodied forth in sweeping and sonorous rhythms befitting the themes.

In *Don Juan* Byron's full power as a satirist appeared. With wicked delight he chastised society for its cant and hypocrisy. The poem, formless and endless, is a riot of humor, satire, comical reflections, beautiful descriptions and bursts of eloquent emotion, countless witticisms and curious felicities of phrase, swift transitions from puns to pathos—

Don Juan

> A nondescript and ever-varying rhyme,
> A versified Aurora Borealis.

It is the frolic of a great intellect, romping in motley, mocking at all seriousness, yet half serious in its mockery, and, in the end, wistfully turning toward—

> The love of higher things and better days,

then pausing suddenly to reflect upon life's futility:—

> Between two worlds life hovers like a star,
> 'Twixt night and morn, upon the horizon's verge.
> How little do we know that which we are!
> How less what we may be! The eternal surge
> Of time and tide rolls on, and bears afar
> Our bubbles.

Byron's poetry flowed from his brain in a wild torrent, like the stream of his mad life. He wrote with impetuous haste, and with a fatal facility that resulted in much careless and slovenly verse. "*Lara* I wrote while undressing after coming home from balls and masquerades." In the splendid apostrophe to the ocean he could write "there let him lay" and not be disturbed. He knew nothing of artistic restraint and had little real artistic taste, but he had the compensating qualities of spontaneity, brilliant dash, and vigor.

His Careless Art

"The most celebrated Englishman of the nineteenth century," Macaulay said of Byron, and Goethe, speaking for the Continent, declared him to be "the greatest genius of our century." No other English poet except Shakespeare ever exercised so large an influence throughout Europe. His works were translated into every civilized language, and for a generation inspired poets and created schools of poetry. Criticism of Byron's poetry, which was long either idolatry or abuse, has not yet settled on a verdict. In the judgment of Swinburne, Byron was surpassed "by three men at least of his own time," and matched "by one or two others," while Arnold strangely couples him with Wordsworth as "first and preëminent in actual performance, a glorious pair among the English poets of the century." And yet the one great and condemning defect in Byron's poetry is its lack of "high seriousness," which Arnold himself has taught us to regard as the chief essential of great poetry. The life of the man was inextricably mingled with his poetry, and in *Manfred* he unconsciously passed judgment upon both:—

Fame and Rank as a Poet

> This should have been a noble creature: he
> Hath all the energy which would have made
> A goodly frame of glorious elements,
> Had they been wisely mingled; as it is,
> It is an awful chaos—light and darkness,
> And wind and dust, and passions and pure thoughts
> Mix'd, and contending without end or order.

Percy Bysshe Shelley

1792–1822

"A beautiful but ineffectual angel, beating in the void his luminous wings in vain." Such is Matthew Arnold's felicitous and disparaging summary of the life and work of Shelley. He was, indeed, the poet of clouds and sunsets, of rainbows and the impalpable wind, the poet whose mission it was to lift the spirit up to the high dwelling-places of stainless beauty. He was the seeker after that—

A Poet of Immaterial Beauty

> Spirit of Beauty that dost consecrate
> With thine own hues all thou dost shine upon
> Of human thought or form.

He knew the heavens better than he knew the world. If *force* is the word to describe Byron, *aspiration* is the word for Shelley, and the perfect symbol of his soaring spirit is the skylark's song:—

> Higher still and higher
> From the earth thou springest
> Like a cloud of fire;
> The deep blue thou wingest,
> And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.

Such poetry can never be ineffectual so long as the sense of the beautiful survives.

Percy Bysshe Shelley was born at Field Place, in Sussex, in 1792, the year of the September massacres in Paris. He was the son of wealthy parents and heir to a baronetcy. His early desire for knowledge was insatiable. He learned languages as by intuition, delighted in physical science, devoured the extravagant romances of the period, and exercised his own imagination extravagantly in juvenile verses and tales. At Eton he was the "Mad Shelley" because he isolated himself—as a

result of sensitiveness and delicacy of taste — and rebelled against the odious fagging system and the brutal sports of his football-loving companions. At Oxford he was occupied mainly with poetry and metaphysics, imbibing revolutionary sentiments in religion and politics from Hume, Locke, and the French materialists, and already shaping in dreams his schemes of social reform. For publishing a sophomoric pamphlet on *The Necessity of Atheism*, protesting against the severities of Calvinistic theology, he was expelled from the university and disinherited by his scandalized father.

School and College

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

But Shelley never sacrificed his principles for his comfort, and martyrdom was a part of his theory of life. Although receiving but a pittance from his family, he married a schoolgirl of sixteen, impelled by the chivalrous purpose of releasing her from tyrannical parents. With intense and Quixotic enthusiasm he engaged in reform enterprises of all sorts. He tried to arouse Ireland to a sense of her servitude, by an *Address to the Irish People*, which he dropped among the crowds in the street from the windows of his lodgings in Dublin, and for the same purpose he launched upon the Irish Sea a flotilla of bottles containing a *Declaration of Rights*. Combined with much folly, there were in these prose tracts passages of sane political wisdom that has since become a part of English law. Shelley hated the established order of society, ruled by kings, priests, and autocrats; he hated war,

A Social Reformer

the instrument of oppressive government; when a student he hated history, because, as he said, it was only a "record of crimes and miseries." But toward the people, victims of the social system, he yearned with the pity of a great and tender heart. Sympathy for the poor and oppressed was with him not merely a sentiment, but a real pain.

In the fearless and impassioned effort to "serve the sacred cause of freedom," Shelley offended both law and society. For the propagation of wild and obnoxious theories he was denounced as a dangerous firebrand and his poems were condemned. Meanwhile his loveless first marriage had ended in tragedy, and he had married the gifted daughter of the social philosopher, William Godwin. In 1818 he left England, and the remaining four years of his life were spent in Italy. Here in the enjoyment of luminous skies and purple mountain slopes he wrote his best poetry. He had just begun to show with what sustained ease and perfect art he could rise to the loftiest realms of inspired song when his voice was suddenly silenced. On a July afternoon of 1822, in the bay of Spezia, his frail yacht was capsized in a gale. The body was washed ashore, and burned in accordance with quarantine requirements, and the ashes were deposited in the Protestant cemetery at Rome, near the grave of Keats—the spot Shelley had described so beautifully three months before in *Adonais:*—

From Bitter England to Poetic Italy

> A slope of green access
> Where, like an infant's smile, over the dead,
> A light of laughing flowers along the grass is spread.

Shelley's life was a life of dreams, poetic ecstasies, and swift impulses of love and compassion for his fellow men. He did not, like Wordsworth and Coleridge, calmly accept the failure of the Revolution, but kept his faith in a golden age of justice and peace—

> If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

Rebellion was his natural temperament, but "rebellion clad in rainbows." In his brief life of thirty years he could not attain to the moderation and philosophic poise of ripened experience. He did not learn, for example, that settled custom, at which he railed, may possibly represent the gathered wisdom of the ages. The pervading spirit of all his poetry is the spirit of youth, and its chief defect is immaturity. He was always a child. His remedy for the world's ills is not force nor law, but love. "Love thy neighbor," that is all, and the golden age will be here. Experience may not justify this simple faith, but the fervor of his youthful spirit, expressed in beautiful poetic imagery, must always fascinate and sustain aspiring souls.

The Poetry of Youthful Spirit

Shelley appears in two aspects in his poetry: as the poet of social reform and the poet of pure lyric emotion. The theme of all his long poems is the regeneration of mankind. The early *Queen Mab* was a crude embodiment of theories that he ultimately pronounced "worthless." The *Revolt of Islam*, a glowing romance in twelve books of Spenserian stanzas, contains beautiful passages, radiant visions of rainbow, clouds, and fire, but is too wild and vaporous to be read without weariness. The lyrical drama *Hellas* celebrates the Greek struggle for liberty.

Poems of Social Reform

The supreme expression of his ethical ideals was reached in the drama, *Prometheus Unbound*, which "holds a unique place in the literature of the world," says Woodberry, "and is the most passionate dream of the perfect social ideal ever molded in verse." Prometheus chained to the rock and tortured by Jupiter symbolizes mankind oppressed by tyranny,—the eternal struggle of liberty and despotism, of good and evil. Jupiter is hurled from his throne by Demogorgon, the spirit of revolution; Prometheus is released and wedded to Asia, the spirit of love and beauty in nature, and eternal peace is established. The drama is undeniably difficult. It is vast, unearthly, mythologic, and magnificent in

Prometheus Unbound

visionary splendors, gorgeous imagery, and the ethereal music of the songs; the characters are symbolic abstractions, only vaguely comprehensible; the action is enveloped in an atmosphere of golden mist that is dazzling rather than illuminating.

It is in his exquisite lyrics, the "cries of the spirit that have sung themselves into the heart of the world," that Shelley wins increasing admiration and love. They have the fragile and perfect beauty of a flower, the charm of the iridescence in—

> An ivory shell inlaid with crimson fire,
> Which comes and goes within its sculptured rim
> Of delicate strange tracery.

Such lyrics as *To a Skylark*, *The Cloud*, and *Ode to the West Wind* are matchless in their overflowing ecstasy, airy lightness and grace, and marvelous melody. In these lyrics there is a peculiar detachment and a blending of the poet's spirit with the spirit of nature. He not only describes, but lives the life of bird and cloud. The yearning voice of the wind is his voice:—

The Pure Lyrics

> Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:
> What if my leaves are falling like its own!
> The tumult of thy mighty harmonies
>
> Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,
> Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, spirit fierce,
> My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!

Allied to the lyrics are *Alastor* and *Adonais*. The first pictures a youth wandering in deep despair among the solitudes of nature, in search of the ideal of perfect beauty, symbolizing the experiences of the poet's own restless soul. *Adonais*, an elegy on the death of Keats, stands next to Milton's *Lycidas*, to which it is superior in passionate eloquence. In the exalted mood and noble art of this, his last poem, Shelley seemed to reach that goal of perfection, that "awful loveliness" to which he reverently dedicated his powers in the early *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty*. The

Alastor and Adonais

"least imperfect of my compositions," he modestly said of *Adonais;* "the costliest monument in verse," says Dowden, "ever erected to the memory of an English singer."

Quite apart from his other poems are *The Witch of Atlas*, "an Ariel flight of fairy fancy," in which his imagination indulges in freakish sportiveness,—

> Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun,

and the rhapsodical *Epipsychidion*, which presents a mystical Platonic conception of love, and constitutes, as he once explained, "an idealized history of my life and feelings." Shelley stepped out of his dreamland to write the tragedy, *The Cenci*, in which there are characters of real flesh and blood and of great tragic power. In this field of reality may be included also his beautiful prose, especially the *Defense of Poetry*, which argues the theme: "Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world." The letters from Italy contain passages of the finest descriptive prose in the language.

Witch of Atlas; Epipsychidion; The Cenci; Defense of Poetry

Shelley was an idealist and a mystic. Shimmering visions of perfection guided his life. Abstractions to him were realities; sharp definition was hateful to his mind. Into the measureless depths of the sky and the ever-changing clouds he would gaze by the hour. He loved vagueness, mystery, soft transitions, and dissolving views:—

> As summer clouds dissolve, unburdened of their rain,
> As a far taper fades with fading night.

"He was the most gentle, the most amiable, and least worldly-minded person I ever met," was Byron's testimony. There was a remote, elfin element in his daily habits. "He comes and goes like a spirit," said one of his family. In the silent shadows of ancient ruins and in deep forest recesses he composed his poetry. He dwelt apart in a realm of beautiful thought, which he ex-

Personal Characteristics

pressed obscurely. "He flew at the grand, the spacious, the sublime, and did not always succeed in realizing for his readers what he had imagined."

His beliefs were broadly tolerant, and therefore misinterpreted. "All religions are good which make men good," he said. The essence of his philosophy of life is love. Love, in his faith, is the pervading principle of nature. This is the spiritual idealism of Wordsworth, Emerson, and all modern nature poets.

> A pardlike Spirit beautiful and swift—
> A Love in desolation masked.

Thus he portrayed himself among the spirits mourning for Adonais. Most fittingly his tomb bears the simple inscription "Cor Cordium," heart of hearts.

John Keats

1795–1821

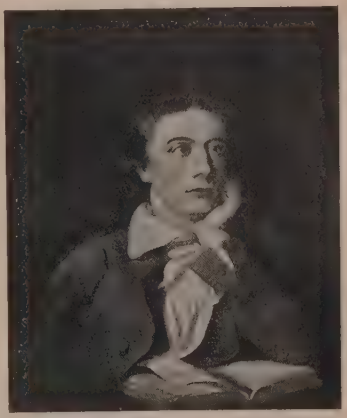
The gentlest rebel and the truest romantic of them all was John Keats, the poet of the beautiful, whose genius, abused in his own brief lifetime by brutal criticism, became one of the strongest influences in nineteenth-century poetry.

The doctrine of heredity affords no aid in accounting for the genius of Keats. His father was head hostler in a London livery stable, who married his employer's daughter, and succeeded to a prosperous business. The boy was sent to a good school at Enfield, kept by the father of Charles Cowden Clarke,

School and Hospital

where he was popular for his highmindedness, pugnacity, and impulses of generosity. He was not studious until about fourteen, when he began to work furiously, took prizes in literature, read constantly, even at meals, and mastered especially all books of mythology. He knew no Greek, but translated the *Æneid* "just for fun."

At fifteen his school-days were ended and he was apprenticed to a surgeon, from whom he broke away to study in the London hospitals, and to become at twenty a licensed physician at Guy's Hospital. He had studied for his profession faithfully, if not wholeheartedly, and he was skillful with the lancet. But while performing an operation he found his mind wandering in fairyland, and, more scrupulous than worldly wise, abandoned the surgeon's knife for the poet's pen.



JOHN KEATS

Meanwhile he had made stimulating literary friendships. With young Cowden Clarke he "traveled in the realms of gold" while they read together Spenser's poems and Chapman's *Homer*. The *Faerie Queene* first aroused his creative powers; his earliest known verses are entitled *In Imitation of Spenser*. After a night in the enchanted land—

> That deep-browed Homer ruled as his demesne,

he wrote the splendid sonnet, *On First Looking into Chapman's Homer*. After this event, in his twentieth year, there could be no question of his poetic destiny. Trembling with ecstasy, he had discovered his own soul, already aflame with poetic desire. Clarke introduced him to Leigh Hunt, in whose library at Hamstead he met Shelley, who seemed to him unapproachable; the painter Haydon, who led him to Greek art and advised him to "read Shakespeare and trust to Providence"; and other young and ardent spirits of the liberal school of thought.

Influence of Friendships

Encouraged by this "brotherhood in song," Keats published a little volume of *Poems* in 1817. In these first flights there is much that is immature and tentative, but also abundant evidence of an original and independent poet who is seriously meditating his art and preening his wings for a higher flight. The poems are filled with the spirit of morning, recording bright rambles in the "happy fields"—

First Volume of Poems

> What time the skylark shakes the tremulous dew
> From his lush clover covert.

Already the chief characteristics of his poetry appear, especially the delicate discernment of beauty in "Nature's gentle doings" —the "taper fingers" of "sweet peas, on tiptoe for a flight," the "voice of crystal bubbles," the dewy unfolding of the "golden lids" of "ardent marigolds." Incidentally he expresses the proper romantic contempt for the art of Pope, whose followers "swayed about upon a rocking-horse and thought it Pegasus."

Elysian dreams crowding for utterance now kept Keats in a feverish excitement of composition. To find favorable conditions for work he tried the Isle of Wight, then Canterbury, Oxford, and Devonshire, returning always to his friends at Hamstead. In 1818 *Endymion* was published, a long poem in rhymed couplets with a flowing and diffuse rhythm. It deals with the familiar myth of the moon-goddess's love for the Latmian shepherd, interwoven with other myths in a confused narrative overburdened with ornament. "A pretty piece of paganism," was Wordsworth's dubious compliment. As an artistic whole the poem is a failure, but scattered thickly through it are charming passages that redeem its general faultiness.

Endymion

With a kind of literary ferocity that was then regarded as criticism, the Tory reviewers of *Blackwood's* and the *Quarterly* pounced upon *Endymion*, paraded its weaknesses, and held up

the "amiable bardling" to public scorn, crying: "Back to the shop, Mr. John, stick to plasters, pills, and ointment boxes."

Keats and the Critics

The preface, which frankly described the poem as a "feverish attempt, rather than a deed accomplished," should have protected him. But he was a friend of Hunt, the Radical journalist, and that was enough. It was a cruel blow, but was borne with manly spirit. Keats was not an æsthetic weakling, as often represented, nor was his soul "snuffed out by an article," as Byron sneered and Shelley believed. There is proof of his courage and strength in the fact that in the next year and a half he wrote his greatest poems.

During this period of intense labor, however, other shadows were gathering. His meager inheritance was nearly exhausted and poverty threatened him. The severities of a walking trip in Scotland had injured his health. His mother and brother Tom had died of consumption, and now in the winter of 1820 he was stricken with the disease. Added to all this was his betrothal to Fanny Brawne, whom he worshiped with consuming love and despair.

Illness and Death

The account of his last days is heartbreaking,—a beautiful young life full of splendid poetic promise, swiftly beaten down by inherited disease, to which his delicate and high-strung nervous constitution could offer no resistance. He went to Italy, tenderly cared for by the artist Joseph Severn. On board ship, for this friend, he copied with changes—not composed, as generally assumed—his beautiful sonnet—

Bright star! would I were steadfast as thou art.

Four months later he died in Rome and was laid by the Aurelian Wall in the Protestant cemetery, where English daisies are growing on his grave. On the simple tombstone by his own request were engraved the words: "Here lies one whose name was writ in water." Not long before, he had said, in the hope and confidence of youthful strength: "I think I shall be among the English poets after my death."

Keats was devotedly loved by his friends, who have all borne testimony to his manly and pure spirit, sweetness of temper, tender sympathy, and noble ideals. His nature was tremulously sensitive to every impression of beauty. His eyes would moisten and his lips quiver when listening to tales of noble deeds or when gazing at lovely objects. He could not read *Don Juan*, and flung the book away in disgust. He loved flowers and music, and cared little for history and nothing for politics. "Never has poet possessed nerves strung to a finer, a more delicate sense of beauty," says Schelling, "and never has artist distilled out of beauty a joy so exquisite and complete." But he was more than a poet of external beauty, and it does him grave injustice to regard his soul as merely "lapped in soft Lydian airs" and enchanting perfumes. The mature and pensive thought of the later poems shows his realization of that "nobler life" in which the true poet must "find the agonies, the strife of human hearts."

Personal Qualities

Seven months before Keats's death appeared the precious volume entitled *Lamia, Isabella, The Eve of St. Agnes, and other Poems*, the volume that was in Shelley's pocket when he was drowned, the volume that placed Keats forever among the great English poets. This was his answer to the brutal critics, the proof that he had "flint and iron in him, that he had character." *Lamia* is a Greek tale of enchantment told in vivid and melodious verse, picturing with pagan frankness the blandishments of physical beauty. The poem also delicately implies the antipathy between the charms of poetry and the staid wisdom of philosophy. *The Eve of St. Agnes* is mediæval in spirit, scenery, and atmosphere, made of the purest romantic material, like Coleridge's *Christabel*. It is the Romeo and Juliet story, ages old in ballad and song, retold by Keats in Spenser's lilting verse and jeweled phrase—a romantic picture, perhaps, rather than a story, so slight is the texture of the narrative. "Poetry more

Last Volume of Poems, 1820

absolutely and triumphantly poetical than these two tales display," says Palgrave, "I know in no literature."

Two conflicting tendencies dominated the art of Keats,—a desire for classic perfection of form and an instinctive sense of romantic freedom. His culture was classic, his natural impulses were romantic. This divided love in a measure accounts for his failure to complete the superb fragment *Hyperion*. It was to have been a blank-verse epic in ten books founded on the myth about the war of the Titans and Olympians, but was abandoned because, as he said, "there were too many Miltonic inversions in it." In other words, Keats felt its artificiality; he could not, like Milton, write freely in the "grand style" of epic. In its impressive dignity of form, the poem is like the Greek temple, but in its spirit it is more like the Gothic cathedral. A few lines will illustrate the stately grace and romantic enrichment of the verse:—

Hyperion

> As when, upon a trancèd summer-night,
> Those green-robed senators of mighty woods,
> Tall oaks, branch-charmèd by the earnest stars,
> Dream, and so dream all night without a stir.

The maturing art of Keats is best measured by the odes, which stand quite by themselves in this class of poems: the *Ode to a Nightingale* and *On a Grecian Urn*, two of the rarest gems of English poetry; *To Autumn*, saturated with the fruity odors of the ripening year; *On Melancholy*, not the morbid mood of Burton, but the twin sister of joy who "dwells with Beauty" in the "very temple of Delight." The ode *On a Grecian Urn* expresses with charming and subtle intensity Keats's theory of the ministry of beauty in the world. The ancient urn, a bit of potter's clay that has survived the ruin of ages, bearing still its message of youthful love and joy, is the symbol of the eternal force of art, of the divine ideal of beauty that forever sustains the souls of men. Learned professors of literature have discovered

The Odes and Sonnets

minute imperfections in these odes, which, though indisputable, bear witness chiefly to the imperfections of professors. The odes are supreme masterpieces of lyric art. With them may be grouped the sonnets, some of which Lowell regarded as "the most perfect in our language"; and also the ballad *La Belle Dame sans Merci*, unique in its weird intensity and concise simplicity, a little allegory, perhaps, of the poet's own experience, and the very quintessence of romantic poetry.

Keats is a nature poet who loves nature not for her spiritual truths, like Wordsworth, nor for her inspiring symbolism, like Shelley, but for her own sake. His keenest pleasure in life, he once declared, was to watch the growth of flowers, and in his last days of suffering he wrote: "I muse with the greatest affection on every flower I have known from infancy." Like Hawthorne's Donatello, he knows nature's secrets through a kind of sympathetic kinship. He drinks in the beauty of living things through every pore of his being. His senses are highly developed, tingling with swift and delicate perceptions. Here is an appeal to four of the senses in a single line:—

Keats as a Nature Poet

'Mid hushed, cool-rooted flowers fragrant-eyed.

His imagination, though loyal to English fields, basks in visions of the warm, luscious South:—

O, for a draught of vintage that hath been
Cooled a long age in the deep-delved earth,
Tasting of Flora and the country green,
Dance, and Provençal song, and sun-burnt mirth!

The effort to translate into verse this delight in external beauty led to a luxuriant style, excessive in the early poems, but later subdued to perfect art. It was this extreme enrichment of expression which he called "loading every rift of a subject with ore." Epithets and phrases often present complete pictures that surprise and charm with their exquisite insight and

color, such as "azure-lidded sleep," and the "musk-rose full of dewy wine." Sometimes a fleeting fancy is made to stand out in bodily relief like sculpture, as, for example, the transitoriness of "Joy, whose hand is ever on his lips bidding adieu," or, a star "watching with eternal lids apart." This is the natural magic, the "fascinating felicity" for which Arnold ranks Keats with Shakespeare. He has the Elizabethan exuberance of spirit and love of imagery, and he has a voice of marvelous melody, modulated from the ecstasy of the lark to the tenderness of the nightingale.

A Rich Poetic Style

But Keats did not rest content in the mere deliciousness of sensations. Though he had none of Shelley's millennial dreams of perfected humanity or of Byron's wild visions of liberty, he had a philosophy. "I have loved the principle of beauty in all things," he said. In the opening line of *Endymion* he proclaimed his creed: "A thing of beauty is a joy forever"; and in the ode *On a Grecian Urn* the conception was developed:—

Philosophy of the Beautiful

> Beauty is truth, truth beauty—that is all
> Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

The finest essence of things, both material and spiritual, is always beautiful, and ability to perceive and enjoy this beauty becomes a permanent aid in fortifying the soul against the ills of life. This is Keats's mission; he pleads for the validity of the warm heart's emotions as against the cold, logical products of intellect; for the success of Apollo, the god of light, against the gods of darkness, as in *Hyperion;* for culture against brute strength.

The Lesser Romantics

The cruel vicissitudes of poetic fame are illustrated in the careers of the minor poets of this period, "poetic underwoods" as they have been called, some of whom, however, in their own

day lifted their heads to the sun with the greatest ones. Thomas Campbell, for example, once vied with his countryman Scott in popularity, wrote songs that have fired the hearts of English patriots, and was honored by burial in Westminster Abbey. His *Pleasures of Hope*, published in 1799, was written in the crisp couplets of Pope, with the personifications and other didactic machinery of a poetry that was near its end. But he caught the new spirit and in 1809 produced the pathetic romance, *Gertrude of Wyoming*, written in graceful, flowing Spenserian stanzas. He still lives in the anthologies and reading-books in the spirited pieces, *Ye Mariners of England*, *Battle of the Baltic*, and *Hohenlinden*. Samuel Rogers, called the "Mæcenas" of the age for his friendly aid to authors, gave Campbell the model for his youthful poem in the sleepy *Pleasures of Memory*, an example of what was once regarded as "elegant" poetry. His descriptive poem *Italy* and his collected *Poems* are now chiefly esteemed for their beautiful illustrations by Turner.

Thomas Campbell, 1777–1844

Samuel Rogers, 1763–1855

The witty, worldly "social singing bird," Tom Moore, friend and biographer of Byron, is an extreme instance of decayed glory. While Shelley was singing his "hymns unbidden" to a world that heeded not, and Keats was known only to be scorned, Moore was a favorite in every English drawing-room, and was believed to be a great poet. His one talent was lyrical and sentimental. He was master and almost the creator of the melodious and frolicsome anapestic verse. The Oriental romance, *Lalla Rookh*, still exercises some of its mellifluous charm. It is cleverly constructed with attractive poetical episodes in a setting of prose narrative; but the luster of its silken surface is faded, and its perfumed elegance now palls on the critical taste. Only the *Irish Melodies*, particularly those that flowed directly from his patriotic Irish heart, are sure of immortality. With Moore may appropriately be mentioned Winthrop Mackworth

Thomas Moore, 1779–1852

Praed, the founder and acknowledged master of the modern school of *vers de société*, or society verse. Poems of this species, as defined by Praed's most distinguished successor, Frederic Locker-Lampson, are "short, elegant, refined, and fanciful, often playful, and not seldom distinguished by chastened sentiment; the rhythm crisp and sparkling, and the rhyme frequent and never forced, while the entire poem is marked by tasteful moderation, high finish, and completeness." Among other contributors to this difficult and exquisite form of poetry are Moore, Landor, Hood, Thackeray, and Oliver Wendell Holmes.

Winthrop Mackworth Praed, 1802–1839

The poet-humorist, Thomas Hood, a pale-faced, melancholy man, was a wit and punster by profession, but not by choice. Always struggling with ill health and poverty, to keep the wolf from the door he spent his fine creative talents on humorous quips and absurd comicalities, volumes of *Whims and Oddities* and *Comic Annuals* which were greedily devoured by the public. He was gentle and patient like Charles Lamb, concealing beneath his jests an aching heart. When not too sad, he wrote perfect lyrics like *Fair Ines*. His poetry runs swiftly from laughter to tears. His tender sympathy flowed out to the suffering poor of London's murky streets, for he knew their sorrow. The voice of a new humane spirit, in *The Song of the Shirt*, stirred with a sting of righteous rebuke the placid and comfortable consciences of the wealthy classes of England and even "drew tears from the eyes of princes." More artistic and more powerful is *The Bridge of Sighs*. Hood gave an almost unique rhythmic utterance to the pain of human poverty, bitterness, and woe.

Thomas Hood, 1799–1845

Bryan Waller Procter, known as "Barry Cornwall," was a prolific writer of songs, possessing a natural gift of melody. He wrote some two hundred and fifty songs, bright madrigals of the woods, fields, and sea, pleasant songs of love and mirth, and tender songs of childhood and home. But his lyric passion was too

Bryan Waller Procter, 1787–1874

mild and bloodless to give distinction and permanence to his verse, and so his hour of glory has passed.

Walter Savage Landor

1775–1864

Isolated in literature as in society, Walter Savage Landor produced work of a peculiarly exalted artistic quality, which was out of tune with his own period and is still unrewarded by its due meed of appreciation. There was something prodigious and Titanic about him. His physique was large and powerful and his passions were as undisciplined as an animal's. His normal temperament was an alternation of explosive wrath and extreme tenderness. The story is told that he threw an obstreperous servant out of the window, and exclaimed: "My God! I forgot the tulips." His character was a picturesque compound of irreconcilable contradictions. He was a fire-eating revolutionist, who fiercely advocated liberty and death to tyrants, yet detested democracy. His life was a continuous warfare, both public and private. He squandered a fortune in an attempt to convert the ruins of Llanthony Abbey in Wales into a home of feudal grandeur. He was too proud to take money for his writings and spent his last years an exile in Florence, living upon the charity of the poet Browning. Through the space of seventy years he produced work of permanent literary worth. He published his first volume of poems in his twentieth year, and the *Heroic Idyls* in his eighty-ninth year; he was the contemporary of Cowper and of Tennyson.

A Prodigious Personality

Landor was a classic among romantics, defying the current literary taste with work that rigidly adhered to Greek models. His one romantic experiment, the youthful romance *Gebir*, is classic in its restrained and condensed expression. He composed often by preference in Latin; the beautiful *Hellenics* are

mainly translations of his *Idyllica Heroica*, written in Latin many years before. His prose and verse alike are masterly in serene and austere art, but frigid, passionless, lacking the magic of spontaneity, and too far aloof from modern feeling to be popular. His mind dwelt upon the heights with heroic characters, occupied with impressive thought and noble imagery. Within his chosen limits his art is exceedingly beautiful, especially in the delicacy and transparent purity with which he pictures the loveliness of small things:—

An Isolated Classic Poet

> I never pluck the rose; the violet's head
> Hath shaken with my breath upon its bank
> And not reproached me; the ever-sacred cup
> Of the pure lily hath between my hands
> Felt safe, unsoiled, nor lost one grain of gold.

The *Hellenics* stand alone in English poetry; their chaste simplicity is like that of the pictures on Greek vases. The clear flawless beauty of such art as *Iphigenia and Agamemnon* is unsurpassed. Scattered prodigally through prose and verse are polished epigrams and lyrical gems, finished with the delicate grace of an ancient cameo. "Some of his shorter poems," says Lowell, "are perfect as crystals." Here is a quatrain written on his seventy-fifth birthday:—

> I strove with none, for none was worth my strife,
> Nature I loved, and next to Nature, Art;
> I warmed both hands before the fire of life,
> It sinks, and I am ready to depart.

Landor is known chiefly as a prose-poet in the monumental series of colloquies, the *Imaginary Conversations*, which are astonishing in the extent and minuteness of the knowledge displayed, and equally astonishing for the uniform nobility of expression. All the world of history and literature seems to be gathered in this assemblage, as large and varied almost as Shakespeare's troupe of great characters: Plato and Diogenes in

an exchange of wit and wisdom, in which Plato is worsted by the cynic; Cæsar discussing politics and farming with Lucullus at his Appennine villa; Sidney and Lord Brooke in fine talk of poetry under the elms of Penshurst; Henry VIII brutally taunting poor Anne Boleyn; Washington and Franklin exchanging views upon British oratory; Dr. Johnson and Horne Tooke arguing spelling reform; Calvin and Melanchthon probing the doctrine of predestination. The length and diffuseness of these dialogues, the scrupulous austerity of style, and the necessary draft upon the reader's own knowledge forbid a wide popularity, but to the competent reader they afford a perennial charm. Landor's masterpiece, however, is *Pericles and Aspasia*, which gives in the form of letters a vivid picture of the life of Athens in her golden age; a book that with reason is regarded by some critics as "the purest creation of sustained art in English prose."

Imaginary Conversations, 1824–1853

A Prose Masterpiece

In the vast reading public, guided by unstable and unreasoned tastes, there is always a saving remnant, with finer critical discernment, to whom the best in literature generally owes its survival. Landor appeals to this minority, to Milton's "fit audience, though few." In the preface to his early poem *Gebir* he said that he would be "fully content" with the applause of ten men of taste and genius, and he never descended from that standard. "I shall dine late," he wrote prophetically, "but the dining-room will be well lighted, the guests few and select." To be among the guests at that banquet is a rare privilege.

Landor's Audience

PROGRAM OF WORK

CLASS STUDY. Byron: *She Walks in Beauty; Fare Thee Well; Stanzas to Augusta; To Thomas Moore; The Prisoner of Chillon; The Isles of Greece; The Ave Maria* (*Don Juan* III); *Maid of Athens; On Completing his Thirty-sixth Year; Childe Harold:* canto iii, sts. 85–87, 92–96, Lake Geneva; 21–30, Waterloo;

canto iv, sts. 42–47, Italy; 1–4, 11–13, 18, Venice; 78–79, 139–145, Rome; 178–186, The Ocean; *Don Juan*, canto iii, sts. 88–100.

SHELLEY: *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty; To a Skylark; The Cloud; Ode to the West Wind; Stanzas Written in Dejection near Naples; To Night; To Wordsworth; Arethusa; One word is too often profaned; When the lamp is shattered; Life of Life!* (*Prometheus Unbound*); *The Indian Serenade; Epipsychidion* (from "The day is come" to the end); *Adonais.*

KEATS: *Endymion*, bk. I, 1–62; *Hymn to Pan* (*Endymion*, bk. I); *Eve of St. Agnes; To a Nightingale; On a Grecian Urn; To Autumn; Lines on the Mermaid Tavern; La Belle Dame sans Merci; Hyperion*, 1–51; Sonnets: *On First Looking into Chapman's Homer; When I have fears; The Grasshopper and the Cricket; Bright Star!*

CAMPBELL: *Ye Mariners of England; Battle of the Baltic; Lord Ullin's Daughter.*

PRAED: *The Vicar; A Letter of Advice; The Belle of the Ball-Room.*

HOOD: *The Bridge of Sighs; Song of the Shirt; Fair Ines; Ruth; A Parental Ode to My Son.*

PROCTER: *The Sea; A Repose; A Petition to Time.*

MOORE: *Lesbia hath a beaming eye; The time I've lost in wooing; Dear Harp of my Country; Oft in the Stilly Night;* From *Lalla Rookh* (Ward, Bronson); *Twopenny Post-Bag, Letter* V; *The Last Rose of Summer.*

LANDOR: *Rose Aylmer; A Fiesolan Idyl; Dirce; To Age; Mild is the parting year; Iphigenia and Agamemnon;* Conversations: *Æsop and Rhodope* (Manly), *Dr. Johnson and Horne Tooke* (Garnett), *Leofric and Godiva, Lord Brooke and Sir Philip Sidney; Pericles and Aspasia* (ad libitum).

BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM. For general works of literary history and criticism, see Bibliography for Chapter XVI.

Nichol's *Byron* (E. M. L.); Noel's *Byron* (G. W.); Elze's *Byron;* Henley's *Letters of Byron;* Trelawney's *Recollections of Shelley and Byron;* Arnold's *Selections* (G. T. S.); Arnold's *Essays in Criticism*, Second Series; Macaulay's *Essays;* Morley's *Critical Miscellanies;* Swinburne's *Essays and Studies;* Lang's *Letters to Dead Authors;* Taine, bk. IV; Dowden's *Life of Shelley;* Symonds's *Shelley* (E. M. L.); Sharp's *Shelley* (G. W.); Brooke's *Selections* (G. T. S.); *Essays and Letters* (Camelot Series); Arnold's *Essays in Criticism*, Second Series; Browning's *Essay on Shelley;* Francis Thompson's *Shelley;* Gosse's *Questions at Issue;* Yeats's *Ideas of Good and Evil;* Colvin's *Keats* (E. M. L.); Rossetti's *Keats* (G. W.); Hancock's *Keats;* Colvin's *Letters of Keats;* Arnold's *Essays in Criticism*, Second Series; Lowell's *Among My Books*, Second Series; Watson's *Excursions in Criticism;* Forster's *Landor;* Col-

vin's *Landor* (E. M. L.); Colvin's *Selections, Verse and Prose* (G. T. S.); Stedman's *Victorian Poets;* Scudder's *Men and Letters;* Lowell's *Later Literary Essays;* Dowden's *Studies in Literature.* Cambridge, vol. XII, chs. ii, iii, iv, ix.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION AND RESEARCH

1. A summary of Byron's personal qualities. 2. The truth and affectation in Byron's description of himself (*Childe Harold*, canto i, sts. 4–11; canto iii, sts. 1–6). 3. Give the substance of Byron's satire on Wordsworth, Southey, and Jeffrey in *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, 195–248 and 430–451. 4. What qualities in his poetry insure his permanent fame? 5. Relations with his sister (*Epistle to Augusta, Stanzas to Augusta*).

6. Shelley's quarrel with his family. 7. What are the strongest effects produced by Shelley's poetry? 8. Compare Shelley's *To Night* with Collins's *Ode to Evening*. 9. Does the "meanest flower that blows" have the same meaning for Shelley as for Wordsworth? 10. Discuss Shelley's portrait of himself in *Adonais*, sts. 31–34. 11. Shelley as a poet of the sky.

12. Give an outline of the life of Keats. 13. Influence of the painter Haydon upon Keats. 14. Indicate the pictures in the ode *To Autumn*. 15. Annotate the *Ode to a Nightingale*. 16. Justify, if possible, Arnold's critical summary: "Keats is with Shakespeare." 17. Make a collection of Keats's beautiful phrases.

18. An account of Landor's education. 19. Landor at Llanthony Abbey. 20. Comparative merits of the two methods of expression, the condensed and naked classic style and the diffuse and ornamental romantic style (consult Colvin's Preface to G. T. Selections from Landor, XX–XXI).

CHAPTER XVIII

THE VICTORIAN AGE

1837–1901

The beginning of the reign of Victoria in 1837 marks an important epoch in the history of civilization. The eminent scientist, Alfred Russell Wallace, called the nineteenth century "The Wonderful Century," estimating the progress in discovery and invention during that period to be greater than that of "the whole preceding epoch of human history." Nearly all of this advancement was made in the sixty-four years of Victoria's reign. Not only were the material arts of life revolutionized, but even the fundamental processes of thought were transformed. The leading elements of this wonderful development must be understood in order to interpret the literature of the period, which in extent, variety, and richness is equaled only by that of the Elizabethan age.

A Wonderful Period

One of the chief results of the social ferment caused by the French Revolution was the essential triumph of democracy. By successive reforms, beginning with the Reform Bill of 1832, the right of the common people to share in government was fully established. The importance of the individual man was recognized, and the sovereignty of an exclusive aristocracy gradually gave way to the representative government of democracy. The King of England to-day has less power than the President of the United States.

Political Progress

The next noteworthy fact is the material progress and prosperity of the reign. In 1837 the first telegraph line was set up in England. The next year the first steamers crossed the ocean, and the great railway lines between London and Liverpool were completed. A year later uniform penny postage was established; before that time it had cost a shilling to send a letter from London to Scotland. Improvements in machinery led to an enlargement of manufacturing; commerce increased; the wealth of the kingdom doubled in fifty years. With wealth came increased comforts and new habits of living; schools were extended, and education through newspapers and magazines, made possible by cheap postage and railways, converted the working people into a reading and thinking class. Literature became more and more democratic.

Material Progress

But prosperity was not equalized. The change from hand labor to machinery enriched the manufacturer and trader but impoverished the laborer, and the era of warfare between labor and capital began with strikes and bread riots. In factories and mines men worked for a shilling a day, and children six to eight years old for a penny a day. Food was expensive and the poor lived without meat, butter, and even salt. The debtor's prisons were crowded, and their filthy condition was unspeakably horrible. Penalties for crime were excessively severe; in the year 1837 there were four hundred executions. These conditions gave rise to the humanitarian movement, reflected in the early Victorian literature. An altruistic feeling was aroused and the obligation of becoming "my brother's keeper" was gradually impressed upon the general consciousness. Authors became reformers. Elliott, the "Corn Law Rhymer," Hood, Mrs. Browning, and the novelists Dickens, Reade, Kingsley, George Eliot, Charlotte Brontë, and Mrs. Gaskell joined sympathetically in the cry for relief of the people's wrongs and sufferings.

The Humanitarian Movement

The most revolutionary force of the period was the wonderful development of physical science, which made large contributions to every form of thought and material progress. John Stuart Mill—whose *Autobiography* belongs to literature—expounded the method of scientific reasoning in his *Inductive Logic*. A violent shock and upheaval in established opinions was caused by the appearance of Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species*, presenting the doctrine of evolution, that is, the orderly development of life from the lowest to the highest forms. Herbert Spencer, in his *Synthetic Philosophy*, applied the doctrine universally to the structure of society, government, morals, and religion. John Tyndall and Thomas Huxley popularized the new theories in lectures and essays that belong to literature by virtue of a vivid and luminous style, which made weighty matter intensely interesting. The lessons of clear and exact expression taught by these scientists have been of great value to literature.

Scientific Progress

QUEEN VICTORIA

The spirit of investigation became paramount. The search for truth, the accumulation of facts as the basis of all reasoning, resulted in a flood of materialism that threatened the very foundations of religion and poetry. The worship of facts seemed

about to supplant all other forms of worship; things of the imagination, ideality, and spirit, seemed about to be overwhelmed by a base and sordid realism. It was hastily assumed that if man had come to his present state by natural law, not by miraculous aid of Deity, the Bible must be entirely discredited. But more accurate knowledge and more temperate judgment on both sides of the controversy revealed possibilities of reconciliation and produced an increasing confidence that science in its devotion to truth is exerting a beneficent, not a destroying influence, and that the fact of God is no less a divine truth under the scientific name of First Cause.

Conflict of Science and Religion

But this reconciliation—by no means yet complete—has come only through painful struggle, the shattering of creeds and formulas, the drifting from faith into doubt, unbelief, and despair. "Alas," cried Carlyle, "how are poor mortals whirled hither and thither in the tumultuous chaos of our era." The characteristic of the age is mental and spiritual unrest,—

An Age of Unrest

> The fever of our fretful life,
> The soul with its own self at strife,

as the poet Palgrave expressed it. This sad turmoil of crumbling faiths and new adjustments is fully pictured in the literature, especially in the profound thought and tender melancholy of such poets as Clough, Arnold, and Tennyson.

At the opening of the Victorian period poetry was in eclipse. Byron, Shelley, Keats, and Coleridge were in their graves. Wordsworth, Southey, and Moore were still living, but only as silent memorials of the glorious past. Tennyson and Browning had published their first volumes, but were as yet hardly recognized. A few faint lights were shining, but "mere asteroids in comparison with the planets which preceded and followed them." Among these was the gentle Hartley Coleridge, who inherited his

State of Literature in 1837

father's moral weakness with some of his gift of poetic magic; the beloved friend of poets, Richard Monckton Milnes, Lord Houghton, whose sweetly meditative lyrics should not be overlooked; and Sir Henry Taylor, whose drama, *Philip van Artevelde*, was an interesting revival of the Elizabethan spirit. A fluttering bevy of "poetesses" were also contributing their sentimental effusions to the fashionable "Annuals" and "Souvenirs." The year of the accession, 1837, was the year of Carlyle's *French Revolution*, Dickens's *Pickwick Papers*, Thackeray's *Yellowplush Papers*, and novels by Disraeli and Bulwer-Lytton, who had already secured popular attention. The new era was to be an era of prose, and the most prolific and characteristic form of prose was to be the novel.

The Victorian Novelists

Character of Victorian Fiction

The Victorian novel is the expression and interpretation of the life of the period, as the drama was the interpretation of the life of the Elizabethan period. In breadth and complexity it differs widely from the eighteenth-century novel. Every class of society is represented, every form of human activity,—problems of government, labor, religion, philanthropy, economics, society,—every object of intellectual and moral concern. The romantic novel of Scott, written primarily for entertainment, gives place to the problem novel and the purpose novel, and fiction assumes some of the higher functions of education. The novel not only presents a comprehensive picture of the age, but also exercises a vast influence in molding the opinions and guiding the energies of the age.

Even while Scott's influence was dominant, novels of a reactionary type were appearing, in which the purpose, more or less definitely conceived, was to describe contemporary manners with realistic fidelity and with humorous, often satirical coloring. Of this type is the *Annals of the Parish* by Scott's

fellow countryman, John Galt, which pictures with delightful humor the experiences of an Ayreshire village minister, a sort of Scotch Dr. Primrose. The best of this class are Jane Austen's novels, which were quietly influential in the direction of realism. Her example of domestic painting inspired the intimate and sympathetic sketches of *Our Village* by Mary Mitford, one of the gentle classics of fiction, and also the rosemary and lavender charm of Mrs. Gaskell's *Cranford*. This author's *Mary Barton* pictured with compelling interest the pinched and grimy life of a factory population.

John Galt, 1779–1839. Mary Russell Mitford, 1786–1866. Elizabeth Gaskell, 1810–1866

Allied to the idyllic group are Bulwer-Lytton's *Caxtons* and *My Novel*, depicting English village life before the days of railways, when the foibles and eccentricities of isolated country folk were permitted to develop to their full bloom of picturesqueness. Bulwer-Lytton was a kind of prose Byron whose dandyisms and polished melodramatic stories once occupied a large place in public interest. He was sensationally brilliant, remarkably versatile, and clever in shifting the sails of his creative talent to catch the popular breeze. He tried every style. His first success was *Pelham*, an audacious satire of fashionable society. He improved the Gothic romance by eliminating the horrors and making the narrative human and poetic in the fairy-story, *Pilgrims of the Rhine;* and, inspired by Scott, he wrote several historical romances, his masterpiece being the *Last of the Barons* (the mighty Earl of Warwick), which is one of the earliest attempts of fiction to interpret history philosophically. More intensely interesting is the *Last Days of Pompeii*, one of the most widely read of historical romances.

Edward Bulwer-Lytton, 1803–1873

Another literary dandy with Byronic affectations was Benjamin Disraeli, who in the intervals of a remarkable political career entertained the public with romances strangely compounded of wit, satire, and cynicism, astonishing epigrams,

vivacious criticism, and rhetorical nonsense. Three of these books belong to literature. *Coningsby* and *Sybil* are political novels, written to propagate the doctrines of a new political party. *Lothair* is a graceful and satirical picture of English high life, a vision of society as it appears to the ruler of an empire, laughing at the puppets whom he fascinates and holds in contempt. There are flashes of wisdom in these books that reveal the insight of profound genius, and no other writer has described with such vividness parliamentary life in England.

Benjamin Disraeli, 1804–1881

In the large company of Victorian novelists three stand out with overshadowing prominence. Each one, in the manner of his individual genius, illustrates the deep moral seriousness that characterizes the best Victorian literature. The works of Dickens, Thackeray, and George Eliot are monumental representatives of the social and intellectual movements of the age.

Charles Dickens

1812–1870

Charles Dickens was born in Portsmouth in 1812, but in London his childhood of deprivation and courageous struggle was spent, as described in *David Copperfield*. The father was the grandiloquent and optimistic Mr. Micawber, for whom nothing ever "turned up" except new phases of poverty. The mother opened a school for girls to which pupils never came. Piece by piece the household furniture went to the pawnshop, and finally the family found a home in the debtor's prison. In an attic the boy discovered the novels of Fielding, Smollett, and Goldsmith, with *Don Quixote* and *Robinson Crusoe*. From these he obtained his preparation for literature. He worked in a shoeblacking factory, where his task was to paste on the labels, at three shillings a week. Long afterwards he wrote of this ex-

Childhood and Education

perience: "The deep remembrance of the sense I had of being utterly neglected and hopeless, of the shame and misery it was to my young heart . . . cannot be written." Relieved from this situation at twelve, he was sent for two years to a worthless school of the type of Dotheboys Hall. His real education was gathered from the London streets and the low companionships forced upon him by poverty.

At fifteen he began the study of law, but found it distasteful. Then he tried newspaper reporting and, like David Copperfield, mastered shorthand and became eminently successful in its practice. He was often sent to distant cities to report the speeches of great statesmen, and in these trips he acquired a knowledge of country inns, miry coach roads, and drunken post-boys, which served later for many a picture like that of the "Dover Road" in *A Tale of Two Cities*. Journalism brought him near to literature. Before he was seven he had astonished his companions with invented stories and even a tragedy founded on the *Tales of the Genii*. At school he "took to writing small tales," according to a schoolmate, "and we had a sort of club for lending and circulating them." His first real literary adventure was in 1834, when a London magazine published the sketch *Mr. Minns and his Cousin*. Of the sensations attending this success he has told the world frankly,—how the manuscript was "dropped stealthily one evening at twilight, with fear and trembling, into a dark letter-box, in a dark office, up a dark court in Fleet Street," and how when he saw his work in all its glory of print he turned into Westminster Hall for half an hour that people on the street might not see his eyes "dimmed with joy and pride." The enthusiasm, the keen joy of creative authorship, remained through life. A volume of light articles, *Sketches by Boz*, was published in 1836, and pleasantly received by the public, but with no suspicion that a new genius had appeared.

Literary Beginnings

In 1837 *Pickwick Papers* opened a new era in English fiction and established the fame of Dickens as "the greatest comic

genius of modern times." It appeared in monthly parts, intended to accompany the pictures of a popular cartoonist.

Pickwick

Hence it is a novel without form, plot, or purpose, merely a series of loosely connected sketches introducing more than three hundred and fifty characters. Sam Weller is as wonderful as Falstaff. Many agree with Frederic

CHARLES DICKENS

Harrison that "the glory of Dickens will always be in his *Pickwick*, his first, his best, his inimitable triumph. Its originality, its irrepressible drolleries, its substantial human nature, and its

intense vitality, place it in a class by itself." Like every sudden eruption of original genius, it transcends criticism.

With the next novel, *Oliver Twist*, Dickens entered fully upon his career as the champion of poor and oppressed humanity, especially of persecuted children, for whom he could plead with a heart moved by bitter memories. Hungry little Oliver in the workhouse, begging for a second help of gruel and receiving a brutal blow for answer, symbolizes the cause which gave moral purpose to all of the novels—the cause of the lower classes, impoverished and degraded by an oppressive social and governmental system blindly and cruelly administered. The third novel, *Nicholas Nickleby*, exposed the cruelties of the private schools, conducted by masters of the Squeers type. *Old Curiosity Shop*, containing the immortal character of Little Nell, paints aspects of life which the pawnshop reveals. In *David Copperfield*, generally regarded as the greatest of the novels, and in *Little Dorrit*, the horrible interiors of the debtor's prisons were opened to the public, and in *Bleak House* the abuses of the chancery court were illustrated.

Novels of Reform

In 1842 Dickens visited America and was received like a royal sovereign. To a friend he wrote: "There never was a king or emperor upon the earth so cheered and followed by crowds, and entertained at splendid balls and dinners, and waited upon by public bodies and deputations of all kinds." The literary result of this visit was the *American Notes*, a book of impressions, in which he placed an ungenerous emphasis on the bad impressions, giving much offense to the young nation by commenting too frankly on palpable crudenesses. In *Martin Chuzzlewit* he again made an infelicitous use of the American experience.

The Visit to America

No stories have more strongly endeared themselves to the English-speaking race than the Christmas stories, *A Christmas Carol*, *The Chimes*, and *The Cricket on the Hearth*. The charm of these short stories for the young folk is undying, and Dickens

is always a welcome guest at Yuletide celebrations. One other story stands almost unique among Dickens's works, the *Tale of Two Cities*, a historical romance, describing the most terrible scenes of the French Revolution. Unlike the other stories, it is artistically constructed, with carefully devised plot, condensed and dramatic narrative, few and well-correlated characters, and one character, Sidney Carton, of tragic dignity and intensity.

Christmas Stories; Tale of Two Cities

It is the peculiar distinction of Dickens to have become a classic in defiance of nearly all the rules of literary art. His style sins constantly against good art and good taste. He knew nothing of restraint and proportion. His plots are incoherent and often unintelligible. The sketchy, episodical features are due partly to the method of publication in monthly or weekly parts. His matter and manner are often vulgar, like the flashy clothes and finger-rings he habitually wore. Out of lower-class London life he created a grotesque world of comedy and farce, a kind of mythologic world of his own. His characters are not real characters; they are, rather, personifications of a single characteristic. Pecksniff is all hypocrite, "'umble" Uriah Heep is all sycophant, Sarah Gamp is all a lie. Dickens is a caricaturist, making the most of the humor of exaggeration. He never analyzes character, but exhibits its externals; he is a wonderful showman, with inexhaustible sources of entertainment. The number of his characters runs into the thousands.

Literary Qualities

The heart of Dickens was in all that he wrote, whether bad or good, and it betrayed him frequently into mawkish and melodramatic sentiment. The tearful pathos for which he is famous has been about equally praised and censured. Such writing as in the death scenes of Little Nell and Paul Dombey may not be good art, but it is powerful art. Of little Paul's death the great Jeffrey wrote to Dickens: "I have so cried and sobbed over it last night and

His Pathos

again this morning, and felt my heart purified by those tears, and blessed and loved you for making me shed them." Stevenson complained that Dickens "wallowed naked in the pathetic." A later judgment of the critic More is better measured: "At his best there is a tenderness in the pathos of Dickens, a divine tenderness, I had almost said, which no other of our novelists has ever found."

His Humor

The crowning quality of these novels is humor, all-comprehending, irrepressible, irresistible humor. In this quality the genius of Dickens is so absolutely unique as to be without parallel. He is "the only Boz." The laughter he evokes is a wholesome, humane laughter, which may in a moment turn into pity and tears. Underlying the tumultuous humor is a philosophy of life, a resolute optimism that can find even in the most sordid conditions some relief of good cheer.

Personal Qualities

Quite as interesting as the novels are the familiar *Letters* of Dickens, which give a direct expression of his intense personality, his nervous and indefatigable activity, his kindness, his exuberance of spirits, and his prodigal expenditure of physical and mental forces. He was an inveterate walker, regarding a daily tramp of ten miles as necessary to keep his brain clear, and in these tramps nothing ever escaped his keen eye. He loved children, was always master of the revels in his own household, and was the first great novelist to picture real children in fiction. For society he cared little, but among friends he was the life of every occasion, like Yorick, "a fellow of infinite jest and excellent fancy." But he was also the sober moralist and reformer, always the people's advocate against every form of injustice and oppression. It is safe to say that the appeal of his books to the English conscience accomplished more for the lower classes than Parliament accomplished in a century. He was the idol of the nation. During the twelve years succeeding his death four million copies of his books were sold in England alone.

In 1856 Dickens established his home at Gads Hill, near Rochester, the scene of Falstaff's exploits, thereby realizing a dream cherished from boyhood. In a shrubbery near the house was his writing-room, "up among the branches of the trees," he said, where "the birds and the butterflies fly in and out." A genuine dramatic talent, which he had cultivated in amateur theatricals, and the stimulus of popular applause, led him in these last years to give public readings from his works. Long tours were made in England and America, which were like triumphal processions; but the hardships attending them broke down his health. In 1870, after a long day's work on *Edwin Drood*, he was stricken with illness and died the next day. He was buried in Westminster Abbey. "For days," said Dean Stanley, "the spot was visited by thousands. Many were the tears shed by the poorer visitors." He had directed in his will that no monument should be erected. "I rest my claim to the remembrance of my country upon my published works." And they are a sufficient and, we must believe, an imperishable monument.

Last Years

William Makepeace Thackeray

1811–1863

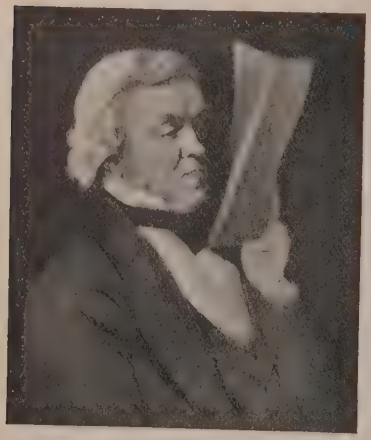
William Makepeace Thackeray was born in 1811 in Calcutta, where his father was employed in the Indian civil service. He was educated at the Charter House school and at Trinity College, Cambridge, without distinction for scholarship in either place, and without taking his degree. For a time he studied art in Paris, with no result except some discipline of a native talent for making comic sketches. Having lost his inheritance in newspaper ventures, he tried to make a living by his slender art acquirement, and even asked Dickens, at their first meeting, to allow him to illustrate *Pickwick Papers*. But journalism

An Experimental Education

was more promising, and the success of contributions to *Fraser's Magazine* and *Punch* determined his career. Twice he attempted to escape from literature into politics and the public service, but, fortunately, was unsuccessful.

Thackeray was always something of an idler, timid and irresolute in his aims, needing the spur of necessity to produce his best work. His domestic life was unhappy, his wife having become insane soon after marriage. This sorrow, added to ill health and the meager returns of authorship, impressed upon his deeply sensitive temperament a settled melancholy, which he concealed, however, by a habitual and almost fantastic mirthfulness. He would keep back the tears with a rollicking rhyme or trifling jest. "He was always trifling, and yet always serious," says his friend Trollope, "was always, within his own bosom, encountering melancholy with buffoonery." His nature was tender, lovable, and generous to excess. The recreation and stimulus necessary to his disposition he found in the life of clubs and fashionable society, where he gathered the impressions of life's petty aims and hollow mockeries which he portrayed in his fiction.

Personal Qualities



WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY

Thackeray's early contributions to the magazines were light, humorous sketches and clever parodies of the high-flown romanticism of Bulwer, Disraeli, and other fashionable idols of the hour. In these early experiments appear the two fundamental

principles of his work, satire and realism. In the *Snob Papers* he began his warfare against snobbery of every type. Henceforth his quick eye was always detecting snobs lurking in every corner of society. His first tale, *Catherine*, the heroine of which is a vulgar rogue, was written with bold realism to rebuke the sentimental and idealizing treatment of criminals, as illustrated by Bulwer's *Eugene Aram* and Dickens's Nancy, in *Oliver Twist*. Still stronger emphasis was given to the realistic trend in the next story, *Barry Lyndon*, a supreme masterpiece of imagined rascality.

Satire and Realism

With the appearance of *Vanity Fair*, in 1847, Thackeray's fame as a novelist and satirist of society was established. Its intense realism was the revelation of a new method and a new power in fiction; it was a rebuke and an antidote for the romantic and sentimental trumpery of the popular novelists. The title indicates the author's attitude toward society, which, as he sees it, is a world of shallow, frivolous, puffed-up weaklings and clever, smooth-faced cheats—a vain show of pretentious virtues beneath which all sorts of vices flourish. Becky Sharp, the heroine, like Iago, Uncle Toby, and Sam Weller, is one of the great triumphs of imaginative art, a character worked out with elaborate completeness, in all its astonishing phases of evil; selfish, cunning, audacious, fascinating, and wicked; a portrait drawn "with an anatomical precision that makes one shudder." The contrasted character Amelia is dull because absolutely true to the type of unheroic, loving, sensible, commonplace Englishwoman. In this novel human nature looks itself squarely in the face and is not pleased with the picture.

Vanity Fair

In the next novel, *Pendennis*, Thackeray's purpose was to paint the picture of a real man, as he is seen in college, in the club, and in the drawing-room, with no diminution or exaggeration of his natural qualities. The story is an extended illustration of human struggle with high ideals and the inevita-

ble compromise that is forced upon all except the absolutely heroic by inherent weaknesses of character. Warrington, one of Thackeray's finest creations, in spite of clear vision and sound sense, has made a failure of life. Young "Pen" is weak, selfish, and untrustworthy, and pays the penalty of his gentlemanly follies by achieving only the commonplace. Major Pendennis, with no ideals at all, everybody likes and repudiates for his worldliness and essential falseness. This novel derives a special interest from the fact that Thackeray wrote into it with extreme frankness much of his own life and character.

Pendennis

By an interlocking of characters, *Pendennis* is connected with *The Newcombs*, which is a comprehensive picture of human life, individual and social. As a novel of manners, in its scope and interest, it is one of the greatest ever written. The shams of society are relentlessly exposed: young women who worship sham Indian princes, sham clergymen who feign emotions that they do not feel, and sham young men who are ashamed of being industrious. Notwithstanding the pervading satire, this is the most genial and likable of Thackeray's novels. Colonel Newcomb is one of the immortals of literature.

The Newcombs

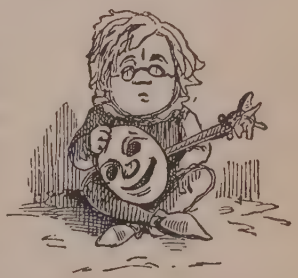
The most beautiful, if not the greatest, of Thackeray's works is *Henry Esmond*, a historical novel descriptive of the age of Queen Anne. Both the manners and the language of the period are reproduced with marvelous exactness. The language is that of Addison's essays and Swift's letters, a miracle of artistry that deceives like a perfect forgery. No other historical novel is at once so realistic and so poetic. There is a warmth of sincerity here not elsewhere found in Thackeray. He writes in the person of the high-minded hero, whom he endows with qualities that satisfy his own sensitive and exacting spirit. "It is the very best I can do," he rightly said. Conception and style are alike almost flawless. Alone it would incon-

Henry Esmond

testably prove the author to be the greatest artist among English novelists. The excellences of *Esmond* are not maintained in its sequel, *The Virginians*, in which the scene is transferred to America.

These five novels compass the greatness of Thackeray, a splendid human comedy in five acts. His other works are quite as interesting, for unlike most authors he left no worthless work. Two courses of lectures, *The English Humorists* and *The Four Georges*, were delivered with great success in England and America. Though incomplete as critical and historical studies, they contain vivid portraits, colored by personal likes and prejudices, and presented with a stimulating zest. He varied his expression, though not his tone, in the poems, or *Ballads*, as they are called; comical, satirical, sparkling verses mingling humor and pathos in strains of touching tenderness. No one ever forgets the gentle pathos of the *Ballad of Bouillabaisse*.

Lectures and Poems



A CARICATURE OF THACKERAY BY HIMSELF

Thackeray was a satirist, but not a cynic. His nature was too gentle and kindly to be indifferent to the pain of any human being, even a creature of the imagination. He ridicules and chastises, but never hangs his sinners. Out of laughter he extracts a lesson of pity or sorrow. His ironical view of life was a habit of mind, a mind that absorbed most readily evil aspects of life; and his creative imagination worked most naturally with this material. This was the limitation of his genius; he was keen-sighted but short-sighted; he lacked faith, did not see life whole, always "had Vanity Fair in his mind's eye and therefore could not see paradise."

Character of his Genius

Vanitas vanitatum is the perpetual theme of his prose and verse:—

> How very weak the very wise,
> How very small the very great are!

In the throng of his characters there are few who stand for high moral worth—hardly a woman to love and honor unreservedly, hardly a man of large and noble qualities to imitate.

Characteristics of his Novels

When asked why he made all his women fools or knaves, he answered wittily, "Madam, I know no others." He once remarked of himself, "I have no brains above my eyes." He had no philosophy, no program of reform, no specific remedy for social maladies. His whole study is character, which he describes as he sees it, discerning with amazing keenness of perception its roots as well as its surface growth. He preaches by negatives, commends beauty by depicting ugliness. Though he does not point his moral, one cannot miss it. In spite of universal viciousness and sham, he believes virtue and nobility are the triumphant forces of life, and that the world, bad as it is, may be made better by sympathy and charity.

It is generally conceded that Thackeray surpasses most of his contemporaries in the excellences of prose style. In the opinion of Frederic Harrison, he is "undoubtedly the most certain and faultless of all the prose writers of the Victorian age."

Thackeray's Style

His style is lucid, natural, graceful, exhibiting an easy mastery of all the resources of language. His expression is always adequate; there are no obscure passages. His excellence is a uniform quality; he never drops into a shambling gait like Dickens, nor rises in lyric flights like Ruskin. Yet he has a distinct individuality, now a caustic incisiveness, and now a soft blending of humor and pathos that is quite his own.

Comparison between Dickens and Thackeray is inevitable. In moral temper, as in artistic method, they were totally unlike.

Dickens was optimistic, exultant in good cheer; Thackeray was pessimistic and melancholy. Both studied human nature chiefly, but Dickens worked from the outside, dealing with actions, while Thackeray worked from the inside, dealing with motives. Both were exceptionally minute observers, Dickens of the curious and extraordinary externals of life, Thackeray of the hidden forces. The one was a caricaturist, the other a character-painter. Dickens pictured the lower classes, Thackeray the higher classes. Both were effective artists, but Dickens was an artist by accident, as it were, and Thackeray was uniformly an artist by cultivated instinct. Both were realists, but the realism of Dickens was a means to an end, while the realism of Thackeray was an end in itself. Dickens's characters would be incredible but for an array of circumstantial facts; Thackeray's characters are merely confirmations of our own experience. Both authors were vastly popular, but for different reasons. "People talked Dickens and thought Thackeray," says a historian of the period.

Dickens and Thackeray

George Eliot (Mary Ann Evans)

1819–1880

Mary Ann, or Marian, Evans was born at Griff House among the rose trellises and hawthorn hedges of "softly-hilled Warwickshire," and there spent the first twenty-one years of her life. Her people were farmers. The father, a man of sterling qualities, is well known to us in the characters of Adam Bede and Caleb Garth. His love of honest work is reflected in the poem *Stradivarius.* The mother's qualities are sketched in Mrs. Poyser and Mrs. Hackitt; an aunt was the original of Dinah Morris, the Methodist preacher in *Adam Bede;* an older sister appears as Celia in *Middlemarch;* the brother Isaac is the Tom Tulliver of

The Evans Family

The Mill on the Floss, of which the heroine, Maggie, is the future novelist herself. This story is very frankly autobiographic, and in the tribulations and aspirations of Maggie Tulliver we have a vivid picture of the mental and spiritual development of Marian Evans.

At sixteen, when her mother died, her formal education was ended and she took charge of her father's household, making the butter and cheese with her own hands. But she continued her studies privately with a rapacious zeal for knowledge that resulted in an acquirement in literature, language, music, science, and philosophy unparalleled among writers of the century. She read and spoke French, German, Italian, and Spanish. Greek and Latin she read "with thorough delight," says Mr. Cross, "and Hebrew was a favorite study to the end of her life." And these languages she learned mainly without an instructor. The family moved to Coventry, where she finally found a congenial atmosphere in the friendship of Mr. and Mrs. Bray, people of wealth, culture, and broad intellectual interests.

Education

Here a new epoch in her life opened. She had been devoutly religious, and, strongly influenced by her Methodist aunt, had accepted and rigidly practiced the Calvinistic austerities of belief and conduct; deprecated novel-reading, enjoyed Young's *Night Thoughts*, and had a shuddering fear of being too much interested in Shakespeare. Under the influence of the brilliant circle of liberal thinkers gathered about the Brays, she became an extreme radical in thought and an agnostic in religion, embracing with enthusiasm the scientific materialism of Darwin, Huxley, and Spencer. But religion remained a deep-rooted sentiment in her nature, and profoundly influenced all her work.

Religious Reaction

At thirty-two, Marian Evans became assistant editor of the *Westminster Review*, the organ of scientific radicalism. She had translated from the German and published Strauss's

Life of Christ, and now wrote book reviews and an occasional essay, giving as yet no sign of imaginative genius. The year 1854 saw her union with George Henry Lewes.

To the advice and stimulating encouragement of Lewes we owe the wonderful series of novels that began with *Scenes from Clerical Life* in 1858, followed in 1859 by her first complete novel, *Adam Bede*. The success of this book established her reputation and determined her career. Henceforth she lived in close seclusion, engaged in arduous study and writing. Her books brought a continuous triumph of literary success, and while "George Eliot" was one of the most conspicuous figures in the literary world, the sensitive, self-depreciating Mrs. Lewes was known only to a few friends who gathered Sunday afternoons at her home, the Priory in St. John's Wood. She made occasional trips to the Continent, spent much time in Florence in preparatory study for *Romola*, and visited Spain in search of local color for her poem, *The Spanish Gipsy*. In 1878 Mr. Lewes died, and a year and a half later she married Mr. John Cross. In the same year she died and was buried beside Mr. Lewes in Highgate Cemetery.

A Secluded Life of Labor

GEORGE ELIOT

George Eliot's novels are divided into two groups, the early stories inspired by her home experiences and the later stories inspired by her scientific studies. Her finest and most enduring qualities are in the early stories. To the life and

scenery of the Midland district she gives an idyllic charm as distinct as that of Tennyson's idyllic poetry. Her prose is suffused with poetry, born of sympathy and affection. *Adam Bede*, she once said, "is a book from my heart of hearts." She paints with loving fidelity the country life she had known as a girl, smug squires, top-booted parsons, thrifty farmers with their homely wit and quaint dialect. Her purpose is to demonstrate the marvel of the commonplace, to reveal the moral greatness of simple unheroic humanity, like that of the Reverend Amos Barton, "who was not even in love, but had had that complaint favorably many years ago." *Adam Bede* is likely to remain her most widely accepted masterpiece. *Silas Marner* is more artistically constructed and is more generally popular. *The Mill on the Floss* is the most intensely human, in its emotional revelations of the autobiographic heroine.

The Idyllic Novels

In all the qualities of style George Eliot is at her best in these early stories. Her expression, here fresh, clear, and flexible, later became labored and over-burdened with learning. There is deep and genuine pathos here, far superior to the pathos of Dickens. Humor, one of her master qualities, that later became satiric and bitter, here is always frank and gracious, crystallizing into witty apothegms that are unsurpassed for homely forcefulness. Moreover, the humor is always natural, an inherent and organic part of character. Mrs. Poyser is one of the immortals. Listen to her reflections upon the birthday party at Squire Donithorne's, as the family returns home across the fields:—

Literary Qualities

I'd sooner ha' brewin'-day and washin'-day together than one o' these pleasurin'-days. There's no work so tirin' as danglin' about, an' starin', an' not rightly knowin' what you're goin' to do next; and keepin' your face i' smilin' order, like a grocer o' market-day, for fear people shouldna think you civil enough. An' you've nothin' to show for't when it's done, if it isn't a yallow face wi' eatin' things as disagree.

The novels of the second group, *Romola*, *Felix Holt*, *Middlemarch*, and *Daniel Deronda*, embody the scientific and ethical thought of the period, and in learning and intellectual power are unequaled in English fiction. But for this reason they are not popular. The burden of deep thought is oppressive. The art is no longer a miracle of spontaneous expression, but the product of laborious study and reasoning. The law of evolution in its relations to the growth of human character is the main theme. The method is psychological analysis. Every character is a psychological problem, to be solved by elaborate and prolonged investigation. Her insight into the inner workings of heart and soul is marvelously penetrating. Like her Dr. Lydgate, she "pierces the obscurity of those minute processes which prepare human misery or joy, those invisible thoroughfares which are the first lurking-places of anguish, mania, and crime."

The Philosophic Novels

Romola is one of our great historical novels, though not so true in its historic coloring as *Henry Esmond*. Its scene is Florence in the golden period of the Renaissance. It is a study of moral decay, the evolution of vast and tragic consequences from a defect of character. The superb Romola, the moral inebriate Tito Melema, and the martyr Savonarola are wonderful psychological portraits. *Middlemarch* is a study of the deterioration of character, as painful as it is powerful. The crushing power of circumstances, the so-called law of environment, is made to appear inexorable. Every lofty aspiration portrayed in the book ends in failure, as if a part of the normal course of human destiny. *Daniel Deronda* is a sympathetic study of modern Hebraism, for which it is said the author read a thousand volumes. Deronda is a Jew who spends his life in futile dreaming of a restored nationality at Jerusalem. The one great character is the serpentine Gwendolen Harleth, who fascinates the reader, as she fascinates Deronda, without winning his

Romola

Middlemarch

Daniel Deronda

homage. Even more than its predecessors, the story is burdened with scientific didacticism.

George Eliot was an avowed teacher. Unlike her fellow realists, she believed that a work of art should exercise a distinct ethical influence. She worked always under a keen sense of responsibility. Impressive as is her art, more impressive is the great soul behind the art, yearning toward struggling humanity. To the problem of mitigating human ills she applied the teachings of natural science: Nature knows no forgiveness for sin; her laws are pitiless; to this austere justice of nature the life of men is subject; as we sow, so shall we reap; life is a tragedy of irreparable blunders. Insistence upon this stern doctrine fills her books with an atmosphere of gloom, pessimism, and despair. But she enforces profoundly the lessons of duty, nobility, and sympathy. "If art does not enlarge men's sympathies," she says, "it does nothing morally." And again, "The greatest lesson in life is tolerance."

Ethical Teachings

Her religion is a deep and fervid altruism, a belief in "one comprehensive Church whose fellowship consists in the desire to purify and elevate human life." Her own sublimest aspiration is for an immortality of good done among her fellow-beings, as expressed in her most famous poem:—

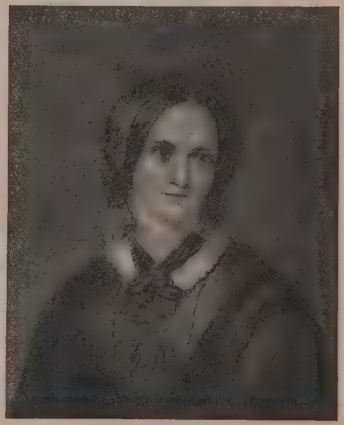
The Religion of Altruism

> O may I join the choir invisible
> Of those immortal dead who live again
> In minds made better by their presence: live
> In pulses stirred to generosity . . .
> In thoughts sublime that pierce the night like stars,
> And with their mild persistence urge man's search
> To vaster issues. So to live is heaven,
> To make undying music in the world.

Twelve years before *Adam Bede* appeared, the English reading world was startled by the sensational novel, *Jane Eyre*, containing evidence of a remarkable genius. Into this book

the lonely, poverty-pinched, soul-yearning daughter of a Yorkshire clergyman poured her intense emotions with the audacity of a rebellious spirit bursting all fetters of accepted decorum and restraint. "A human document written in blood," Chesterton calls it. It is a singular compound of supreme genius, crude art, and ignorance of the world. The hero, Rochester, is a coarse, domineering brute, and the heroine with a fierce, independent soul that defies the conventions, dares to love this brute. The romantic extravagance of the plot is lost in the blazing passion of the story. With or without approval, the heart of the reader leaps and pounds with the heart of the heroine.

Jane Eyre, 1847



CHARLOTTE BRONTË

The story of the Brontë sisters, Charlotte, Emily, and Anne, is one of the tragic episodes of literary history. The parsonage of Haworth, a remote village of Yorkshire, was their only world. On one side was the graveyard, on the other a wind-swept heath, extending to the horizon. Daily grinding toil, housekeeping, teaching in boarding-schools, serving as governesses, caring for a blind father and a drunken brother,—such was their life; and underneath it all there burned the desires of genius. A volume of *Poems* by the three sisters (the cost of publication paid from their own slender savings) attracted no attention. With undaunted courage, in the secrecy of midnight, they wrote novels which

The Brontë Sisters, Charlotte, 1816–1855; Emily, 1818–1848; Anne, 1819–1849

were long rejected by the publishers, until death and fame came almost hand in hand. The talent of Anne Brontë was only a pale reflection of that of her sisters. Emily Brontë was a wild, impetuous soul, kindred with the soul of the wild heath that she passionately loved—a soul precisely described in her own lines:—

> In life and death, a chainless soul,
> With courage to endure.

In her only novel, *Wuthering Heights*, a story of vengeance, madness, and horror, the Gothic romance reached its culmination. It is still read for the author's sake.

Besides *Jane Eyre*, Charlotte Brontë wrote *Shirley*, a vivid picture of Yorkshire life, largely autobiographic, and containing a minutely studied portrait of her sister Emily; and the more artistic *Villette*, inspired by her one glimpse of the great world in a French school in Brussels. The vehement art of the Brontës, though romantic in form, is realistic in its painting of intense emotions. Although representing only a little remote corner of nature and experience, it reveals much deep truth. Characteristically Charlotte Brontë once said: "I always like to penetrate to the real truth; I like seeking the goddess in her temple and handling the veil and daring the dread glance." It was only a step more to the deliberate realism of George Eliot, dealing with the human conscience through scientific processes.

Realism

The fame of Charles Reade, once as great as that of Charles Dickens, is now greatly diminished, and depends almost entirely upon one book, his masterpiece, *The Cloister and the Hearth*. In this book he presented upon a vast canvas a picture of the varied life of the Middle Ages. Like Dickens, he used fiction as an instrument for aiding the humanitarian and reform movements of the period. *Put Yourself in his Place* is a story of labor-union troubles, quite pertinent to the present time, and

Charles Reade, 1814–1884

Never Too Late to Mend, which deals with the abuses of prison discipline, is still read with interest. Reade was a lover and a close student of the stage and he constructed his plots with strong dramatic effects. But the people in his plots are actors rather than characters. His novels were compiled from facts and incidents laboriously gathered into huge note-books, the making of which preceded the writing of each story; and these note-books are the evidences of his limitation—a strenuous talent, vastly diligent, but lacking the vitalizing spark of true genius.

A more remarkable example of prodigious literary industry is afforded by the work of Anthony Trollope, a manufacturer rather than a creator of fiction, who wrote not by inspiration, but by the watch,—so many words an hour, so many pages a day, produced everywhere and anywhere, at the club, in the railway carriage, in the state-room of a steamer. He truly said of himself: "It's not the brain that does it, it's the cobbler's wax on the seat, the sticking to my chair." He was proud of being the champion novelist of the age for quantity and rapidity, proud of producing a volume in three weeks, three novels in a year, sixty works in thirty-five years, besides attending to the duties of a post-office surveyor.

Anthony Trollope, 1815–1882

Such work must be for the most part commonplace and dull, but in some of it Trollope undeniably reached a high plane of literary distinction. His style is scrupulously pure and moderately elegant, never dropping into the tawdriness of which Dickens was capable. His scene is the life of ordinary "genteel" English folk, which he pictures with photographic fidelity. But his realism is irreproachably clean and wholesome. The best stories of the Barchester cycle, *The Warden*, *Barchester Towers*, and the *Last Chronicle of Barset*, fall little short of classic distinction. He made an exhaustive study of the little social world of the cathedral close, describing every member of this ecclesiastical

Character of his Novels

community from bishop to verger, their wives, children, and country relatives, with a devout observation and true divination of character.

Charles Kingsley, clergyman, social reformer, poet, novelist, essayist, naturalist, and professor of history, was a brilliant, versatile, and adventurous writer in these many fields. He wrote excellent songs and ballads, and in *Andromeda* made the most successful experiment in reproducing the classic hexameter in the English language. He wrote two historical romances of high merit. *Hypatia* is a fascinating story of the struggle between pagan philosophy and Christianity in the fifth century. Its scenes are vivid and picturesque, and, though often inaccurate and theatrical, leave imperishable impressions of historic truth. Better written is *Westward Ho!*, a tale of the great days of Elizabeth, Drake, and the galleons of Spain, which to most readers, as to Andrew Lang, is "a superlatively excellent romance of English virtue and valor." More characteristic of the author's Quixotic temperament are *Alton Locke* and *Yeast*, explosive pleas for a more righteous treatment of the working classes.

Charles Kingsley, 1819–1875

Kingsley was a good fighter, but a poor reasoner, and he injured his art through his fondness for controversy. His vivid style, robust energy, and breezy enthusiasm for righteousness gave him a wide popularity, and his writing was for the time a valuable ferment in social and religious thought.

George Meredith

1828–1909

The inexplicable novelist and poet, George Meredith, worked nearly a lifetime before obtaining the high distinction now accorded him by the critics, and his books will probably never obtain an audience commensurate with that distinction.

His work is absolutely *sui generis*, its originality, or singularity, being so positive as to give it an eminence of isolation.

A Lifelong Struggle

The son of a Welsh father and Irish mother, George Meredith was born to poverty and neglect. When he was five years old his mother died, and, abandoned by the father, he was committed to the care of relatives. At fourteen he was sent to a school in Germany for two years, but he was essentially self-educated. He served as a lawyer's apprentice until he was twenty-one, when he began as a journalist the rigorous literary career which he pursued unflinchingly in the face of general indifference and neglect for nearly sixty years. In the early years of his struggle it is said that a bowl of porridge was often his day's portion of food. Not until late in life was he able without daily toil to meet the expenses of his modest country home in Surrey.

The Principal Novels

Meredith's first important novel, *The Ordeal of Richard Feveril*, appeared in 1859, and met only with a cold reception. Not until the publication of *Diana of the Crossways*, twenty-six years later, was public attention seriously attracted to his work. These two novels and *The Egoist* are his most representative books. *Richard Feveril* is filled with poetry, comedy, wit, and wisdom, through which a beautiful love-story is set forth and a philosophy of education elaborated, leading to the conclusion that liberty of the individual is more important than the wisest educational theories. The brilliant Diana is an embodiment of Meredith's conception of the modern woman, the equal of man in "brain-stuff," with a charter of privileges hardly less limited. The *Egoist* is a psychological analysis and satirical exposition of selfishness, a dissertation more than a story. Its truth, to the extent that it can be deciphered, is appalling; the inevitable ego in us all is mercilessly flayed until we are left with a smarting self-contempt. Before attempting to read any one

of these novels, it would be better to read *Evan Harrington*, which with much frolic and laughter ridicules the pretensions of "polite" society.

An eccentric and baffling style is for the ordinary reader an obstacle to the appreciation of Meredith's indisputable genius. The imp of the perverse seems to have guided his pen, leading him not to express, but to conceal his thought by an ingenious artistry. His meaning is revealed by indirections, recondite allusions, side glances, innuendo, subtle metaphors, tortuous sentences. Epigrams scattered prodigally in the text, like diamonds in the rough, reveal their sparkling truth after patient meditative grinding. The expression is too continuously brilliant. As Henley suggests, "His pages so teem with fine sayings and magniloquent epigrams and gorgeous imagery and fantastic locutions that the mind would welcome dullness as a bright relief."

An Exasperating Style

Such writing furnishes an exhilarating intellectual stimulus. It allures while it exasperates. It is often as obscure as German metaphysics, as, for example, in the introduction to *Diana of the Crossways*. There is much solid thought, much excellent criticism to be had, but the reader must sweat for it. Of all the novelists Meredith is the most exclusively intellectual. His attitude is one of complete detachment; he has no emotions, no temperament, is coldly analytical, sublimely contemptuous. The result is artificiality; characters are types rather than individuals, and they talk like lesser Merediths; sentiments are secretions from the brain, love is a psychological experience. Occasionally, when his affections are momentarily engaged, he writes with directness and tender beauty, but generally he writes only for the Meredithian elect. In his poetry, even more than in his prose, the involved expression prohibits general enjoyment of the many beauties of thought and vision.

A Coldly Intellectual Genius

The inspiring purpose of Meredith's fiction is to chastise

the shams and hypocrisies of life, and his chief instruments are satire and humor. His satire is as cutting as a surgeon's knife, opening up the secret lurking-places of disease in human nature. His realism is relentless. "Sacred reality" is the divinity he worships. The humor pervading his work is a pungent flavor, for which the taste must be cultivated. Sometimes it is frank and obvious, but more generally it is elusive, luring the reader like a will-o'-the-wisp. It is humor that seldom laughs, a thing of the head, not of the heart. It is even a philosophy of life. "The comic spirit," Meredith maintains, which "laughs through the mind," is a cure for pedantry, sentimentalism, and all moral and mental shams. The power of laughing at one's self is a saving grace, a force of civilization.

Satire and Humor

One of the most influential of the psychological novelists is Thomas Hardy, who uncompromisingly insists upon the scientific conception of life. His stories are tragedies of fate; the characters are victims of the implacable forces of nature, which is indifferent, ironic, even malignant toward mankind. He recognizes no forces of spiritual beneficence. The final result of his analysis of human existence leads only to the necessity of stoical endurance and to bitter melancholy.

Thomas Hardy, 1840–

The material of Hardy's fiction is all drawn from the primitive life of his native soil, Somerset and contiguous shires, for which he revived the old name Wessex. Among these people who live close to the earth he finds, as he believes, the elemental truths of humanity, free from all false trappings of cultivated society. This life he describes with marvelous power and completeness. His best novels are the earlier ones, as *Far from the Madding Crowd* and *The Return of the Native*, in which there is a delightful bucolic humor and a charming poetic description of simple country folk. In the last and most famous novels, *Tess of the D'Urber-*

Studies of Wessex Life

villes and *Jude the Obscure*, his realism becomes terrific and repellent, and in the latter offends the decencies of nature as well as of art with its naked savagery. The woman of these novels is hardly more than a splendid animal, exhibiting momentary promptings of a spiritual nature, but normally a creature of instincts and passions rooted in the flesh.

As Hardy's genius ripens, it becomes hard rather than mellow. The brightness and blithe idyllic grace of his early stories are changed to pessimism and gloom. Even nature, whose face fills the background of all his stories, is made a sympathetic participant in his tragic drama. The barren heath, the lonesome moorland, the pitiless rain-clouds, lend their melancholy to the brooding souls of the actors. The power of his art is in its native Wessex savor, by which also its limitation is denoted. Through long observation of this rugged piece of humanity, Hardy seems to lose his sense of proportion, as he does his sense of delicacy. Even in Wessex there are sparkling brooks as well as black and slimy tarns; and, anyhow, Wessex is not the world.

Hardy's Pessimism

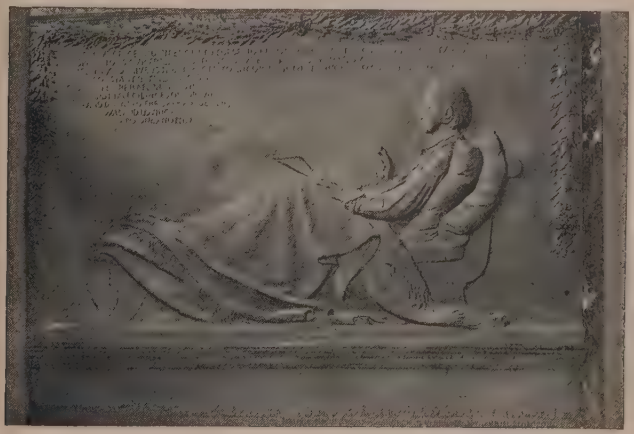
Robert Louis Stevenson

1850–1894

It is a relief to turn from the depressing realism of the psychological school to a romantic reaction of idealism and good cheer. Seldom if ever has an author won such universal affection as has Robert Louis Stevenson, through a perfect union of lovable personality and gracious literary art. These two points of emphasis, a beautiful character and a beautiful style, indicate the chief significance of all his work as essayist, novelist, and poet. The intimate revelation of himself — his manliness, courage, sympathy, sturdy morality, and radiant cheerfulness—gives fragrance to all his writings. And this wandering Scotchman,

A Lovable Personality

restless adept in adventure like one of his heroes, was an invalid from early childhood, driven to the remotest parts of the earth to escape dread disease, yet always writing in a joyous spirit, with never a word of complaint, though walking hand in hand



ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON
From the Tablet by St. Gaudens in St. Giles's Church, Edinburgh

with the messenger of death. In the deepest distress there was always the solace of a "happy thought":—

> The world is so full of a number of things,
> I'm sure we should all be as happy as kings.

The morning prayer that he wrote breathes the spirit of his whole life: "Give us to go blithely about our business. Help us to play the man; help us to perform the petty round of irritating concerns and duties with laughter and kind faces."

With peculiar candor Stevenson described for us the discipline of his preparation for literature. His charming style

was a much-labored acquirement. Its aim was the beauty of simplicity, its first principle, "war upon the adjective." He abjured "literaryisms," and dreaded lest his meaning might be covered by a "veil of words." He liked "naked writing; and yet sometimes one has a longing for full color, and then comes the veil again." He dearly loved quaint and euphonious words and felicitous phrases, but used them with scrupulous restraint. "Yesterday I was a living half-hour upon a single clause," he writes to Collins. If there is a defect in his art, it is an over-solicitude for perfection. All must agree with Henry James that "it is impossible not to open one's eyes at such a paragraph as this," in which the miller tells where the river goes:—

A Scrupulous Style

> It goes out into the lowlands, and waters the great corn country, and runs through a sight of fine cities (so they say) where kings live all alone in great palaces, with a sentry walking up and down before the door. And it goes under bridges, with stone men upon them, looking down and smiling so curious at the water, and living folks leaning on their elbows on the wall and looking over too. And then it goes on and on, and down through marshes and sands, until at last it falls into the sea, where the ships are that bring tobacco and parrots from the Indies.

Stevenson is chiefly known as a romancer. The romances of adventure, such as *Treasure Island* and *The Wrecker*, are refined picaresque tales that please boys with their perpetual-motion plots, and please men with their fine craftsmanship. More important are the romances of character, such as the Scotch stories, *Kidnapped*, *David Balfour*, *The Master of Ballantræ*, and what would have been his masterpiece, the unfinished *Weir of Hermiston*. In these stories there is realism as well as romance. The analysis of character is as accurate as the inventions are ingenious. Scotch heather, Scotch rain, and Scotch religion are equally pungent realities, giving tone and color. *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* is a kind of spiritual allegory—the Scotch conscience working at the problem of good and evil with which every individual soul

Principal Romances

must wrestle. Beneath all his exciting inventions Stevenson is really an austere moralist, "a Knox speaking in fables." The art may conceal, as it should, the moral of the story, but the moral is there.

Essays and Poems

The essays in *Virginibus Puerisque* and *Familiar Studies of Men and Books*, clear and penetrating glimpses of life and literature, are full of sweetness and light, and preach a half-humorous, half-philosophic gospel of enjoyment. Midway between the essays and the romances are the sketches of personal adventure, *An Inland Voyage* and *Travels with a Donkey*, little Odysseys in graceful prose, and the exquisitely poetical short stories, like *Will o' the Mill* in *The Merry Men*. The poems are lacking in the fluent grace of the prose, but the delights of the nursery would be sadly diminished by the loss of *A Child's Garden of Verses*, which records in artless rhymes the author's own child experiences in the land of "make-believe"—the land in which he always loved best to dwell.

Rudyard Kipling

1865–

The popularity attending the appearance of Rudyard Kipling was almost as great as the early popularity of Dickens. He opened a new field of literary interest with his strange tales of India, which is quite as much his special province as Wessex is Hardy's.

Kipling was born in India in 1865, was educated in England, and at seventeen returned to India and engaged in journalism. He published *Departmental Ditties* and several collections of short stories which gave him local celebrity. At twenty-four he went to London and won immediate and immense fame as a new literary genius. He married an American woman, lived four years in Vermont, and then settled in Sussex, England.

Later he became a traveler in all parts of the world, gathering literary material from all regions bordering the "Seven Seas."

The promise of Kipling's poetry has not been fulfilled, and his ultimate fame will probably rest on his short stories; in this form of fiction he is accepted as one of the chief masters. His power of telling a story in brief space by means of suggestive description, swift action, and vivid pictures is quite unsurpassed. His most original work is in the early stories dealing with Indian life, especially the barrack-room civilization of the British residents. The roistering "Tommy Atkins," the typical British soldier, is his favorite character. In *The Light that Failed* he presents with dash and furor of description the tragedy of an artist who is stricken with blindness. The remarkable book *Kim* is not so much a story as a confusion of scenes and incidents, photographically described, presenting the customs and thought of native Indian life.

Prose Work

RUDYARD KIPLING

The later stories are not less surprising in their substance, but are less genuine and spontaneous. Kipling here appears as an up-to-date mechanic, and converts his technical knowledge of locomotives, automobiles, and airships into fiction. The result suggests a straining after originality, the substitution of cleverness for inspiration, fantastic invention for artistic fiction. Exception may be made of occasional creations like the singular and subtle *They*. The most original and probably

most enduring of the prose works are the *Jungle Books*, animal stories that fascinate both old and young. The little boy, Mowgli, who is adopted by the wolf and becomes a brother to the animals, embodies a new conception of sympathy between wild life and human life, and is a remarkable stroke of genius.

Kipling's verse is spirited and impetuous like his prose, but the swing and swagger of his *Barrack-Room Ballads* are less captivating, now that the oddity has worn away so as to reveal the thinness of the poetry. He caught the bold movement of the old ballads and used it with much skill. But only occasionally does he sound a profound note, as in *The Recessional*. The ringing tones of *Danny Deever* produce a shudder like the rattle of musketry, and there is genuine magic in the romantic *Mandalay*. His sea poetry is drenched with real brine. In *The Seven Seas* he celebrates with a fervid patriotism the glorious destiny of the British Empire. But he sings most easily in the Cockney dialect of his tipsy soldiers:—

Poetry

> So 'ere's *to* you, Fuzzy-wuzzy, at your 'ome in the Sowdan;
> You're a pore benighted 'eathen, but a first-class fightin' man.

The chief quality of Kipling's work is force,—a strenuous spirit and a fierce directness of expression that compel attention and defy settled notions of propriety. He neither creates nor analyzes character; he is content to suggest it by action. He is realistic, even grossly realistic, revealing often the journalistic habit of reciting repulsive details. He is also romantic, but he finds his romance in the marvels of every-day life. The materialism of the age does not depress him as it depressed Carlyle and Ruskin; it inspires him. His soul finds a sympathetic delight in the soul of the steam-engine and of the airship.

Literary Qualities

PROGRAM OF WORK

Special difficulties are encountered in the classroom in dealing with the novelists, owing to the inadequacy of selections. However, the previous reading of the students can be utilized, and the main characteristics of each author can be presented by selections and discussions. The following program will furnish material for class work, and also serve as a general reading course.

READING AND STUDY. DICKENS: *A Christmas Carol; David Copperfield; Pickwick Papers; Tale of Two Cities; Our Mutual Friend*, ch. v. Selections in Craik and Manly.

THACKERAY: *Henry Esmond; The Newcombs; Vanity Fair*, chs. xii, xiii; *English Humorists*. Selections in Craik and Manly.

GEORGE ELIOT: *Silas Marner; Romola; Mill on the Floss*, bk. VII, ch. v. Selections from *Adam Bede* (Eng. Cl. S.).

STEVENSON: *Treasure Island; David Balfour; Inland Voyage; Travels with a Donkey; François Villon* (Manly, Century); *Will o' the Mill*. Essays: Child's Play, Æs Triplex, The Foreigner at Home (Century); Poems: *Child's Garden of Verses*—ad libitum; *In the States, Heather Ale*.

MEREDITH: *The Egoist* entire, or ch. xx; *Evan Harrington*, ch. viii; *Diana of the Crossways*, chs. xvi, xix. Poems: *Love in the Valley; The Lark Ascending; Dirge in the Woods; Juggling Jerry*.

READE: *The Cloister and the Hearth*.

BULWER-LYTTON: *Last Days of Pompeii*.

KINGSLEY: *Westward Ho!*

TROLLOPE: *Barchester Towers*.

BRONTË: *Jane Eyre*.

GASKELL: *Cranford*.

HARDY: *Far from the Madding Crowd*.

BLACKMORE: *Lorna Doone*.

KIPLING: *The Jungle Books; The Man Who Would be King; The Courting of Dinah Shadd; The Brushwood Boy*. Poems: *Recessional; Mandalay; Fuzzy-Wuzzy; White Horses; The Bell Buoy*.

LITERARY HISTORY. Walker's *Literature of the Victorian Era;* Saintsbury's *History of Nineteenth-Century Literature;* Mrs. Oliphant's *Victorian Age of English Literature;* Perry's *Study of Prose Fiction;* Cross's *Development of the English Novel;* Dawson's *Makers of English Fiction;* Harrison's *Studies in Early Victorian Literature*.

BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM. Ward's *Dickens* (E. M. L.); Forster's *Life of Dickens;* Gissing's *Dickens: A Critical Study;* Chesterton's *Dickens;* Kitton's *Dickens: Life, Writings and Per-*

sonality; Trollope's *Thackeray* (E. M. L.); Melville's *Life of Thackeray;* Lilly's *Four English Humorists;* Sedgwick's *Essays on Great Writers* (Thackeray, Macaulay); Brownell's *Victorian Prose Masters* (Thackeray, George Eliot); Cross's *George Eliot's Life, Letters and Journals;* Stephen's *George Eliot* (E. M. L.); Cooke's *George Eliot: A Critical Study;* Hutton's *Guides of English Thought;* James's *Partial Portraits* (George Eliot, Stevenson); Olcott's *George Eliot: Scenes and People in Her Novels;* Gaskell's *Charlotte Brontë;* Birrell's *Charlotte Brontë;* Balfour's *Life of Stevenson;* Colvin's *Letters of Stevenson;* Raleigh's *Stevenson;* Phelps's *Modern Novelists* (Stevenson, Hardy, Kipling); Hamerton's *George Meredith: His Life and Art;* Bailey's *The Novels of George Meredith;* Beach's *The Comic Spirit in George Meredith;* Johnson's *The Art of Thomas Hardy;* Abercrombie's *Thomas Hardy: A Critical Study;* Le Gallienne's *Rudyard Kipling;* Falls's *Rudyard Kipling.*

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION AND RESEARCH

1. Points of similarity and of difference in the reigns of England's two greatest queens. 2. Make a list of important historical and literary events occurring in or near the year 1837.

3. Give an account of Dickens's work as a reformer. 4. A study of the character of Mr. Pickwick. 5. Dickens's connection with America. 6. Illustrate his pathos, its merits and defects. 7. How does *A Tale of Two Cities* differ from the other novels?

8. Make a character study of Col. Newcomb. 9. Compare Thackeray's humor with that of Addison, of Lamb, of Dickens. 10. How does Thackeray's method of treating the historical novel differ from Scott's? 11. Describe the general characteristics of Thackeray's novels.

12. Construct from *The Mill on the Floss* and *Adam Bede* an account of George Eliot's early life. 13. Explain the moral of *Silas Marner;* is it unfolded naturally from the story? 14. What are the lessons that George Eliot wished to teach in her novels?

15. A comparison of *Treasure Island* with *Robinson Crusoe.* 16. Explain, with ample illustrations, Stevenson's principles of style. 17. Make a selection of passages from *The Egoist,* or *Diana of the Crossways,* or *Richard Feverel,* illustrating Meredith's mannerisms. 18. Explain the point of the satire in *The Egoist.* 19. What are the merits and defects of Hardy's novels? 20. Point out the elements in Kipling's works that have produced his great popularity.

CHAPTER XIX

THE VICTORIAN ESSAYISTS

The growth of periodical literature in the Victorian age contributed to the development of the essay, which proved to be a convenient, dignified, and effective medium of expression for the newly awakened interest in science, religion, art, and sociology, as well as in pure literature. The monthly magazine became the forum in which the greatest intellects of the age met in public debate. By a natural evolution the critical, historical, and controversial essay was expanded into the full biographical or historical treatise, as in the work of Macaulay, Carlyle, Ruskin, and Arnold. These names, each representing strong individualistic qualities of literary art, are shining names in the prose of the century.

Growth of the Essay

Thomas Babington Macaulay

1800–1859

The ancestors of Macaulay were Scotch Presbyterians, the grandfather and great-grandfather being ministers of the kirk. His father was an editor and anti-slavery reformer, and his mother was a woman of unusual intelligence. The story of his boyhood is a record of marvelous precocity that sounds like a fairy-tale. From the age of three he read incessantly and voraciously, and retained what he read in the most wonderful memory on record. At seven he wrote a "compendium of

universal history" and a summary of the history and doctrines of the Christian religion. He would compose an ode or a hymn while at the breakfast-table. At eight he repeated the *Lay of the Last Minstrel* to his mother after a single reading, and wrote epics of his own in the same style. Later in life he was heard to say that if all copies of *Paradise Lost* and *Pilgrim's Progress* were destroyed, he would undertake to reproduce them from memory. At eighteen he entered Cambridge, won a fellowship in Trinity, and distinguished himself as a debater and conversationalist. He studied law, but abandoned it when he achieved his first literary success.

A Precocious Mind

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY

In 1825 Macaulay published the essay on *Milton* in the *Edinburgh Review* and reached literary celebrity with a single leap. This essay marked an epoch in the history of prose. All that he wrote during the next twenty years appeared in this review, except the *Lays of Ancient Rome*, in which he celebrated in ringing ballad verse the antique virtues of Horatius, Virginius, and other great Roman heroes. With Macaulay's literary success began also his success in society, where his brilliant talking was long regarded as a kind of phenomenal exhibition. Henceforth his career was one of uninterrupted triumph. He was repeatedly elected to Parliament, where he established his fame as an orator in the debates on the Reform

Bill. He spent four years in India as a government official at a salary of £10,000. He was once a Cabinet minister, and finally was made a peer of the realm as Baron Macaulay of Rothley. He never married. His domestic life, spent mainly with the family of his sister, Lady Trevelyan, was happy and beautiful. At fifty-nine he died while sitting in his library with an open book by his side, "leaving behind him a great and honorable name, and the memory of a life every action of which was as clear and transparent as one of his own sentences." In Westminster Abbey he was buried, at the foot of the statue of Addison.

A Triumphant Career

It is safe to say that Macaulay's *Essays* have been one of the most efficient instruments of modern education. Their enormous popularity during the Victorian era has scarcely been diminished, although the critics are now inclined to depreciate their value. Thousands owe their knowledge of history and literature to the inspiration of these essays. In form and method they constitute a distinct type. A person or an epoch is pictured by gathering about a central topic vast masses of details, so skillfully employed as to set forth the man or the period with a vivid reality that captivates and convinces the mind of the reader. In historical portraiture Macaulay is supreme. The essays on Clive and Hastings are monumental in their richness of knowledge and splendor of diction. Though his analysis of literary genius is least satisfactory, the essays on Milton, Dryden, Addison, and Dr. Johnson are classic examples of his method.

The Essays: Value and Character

The chief ambition of Macaulay's life was his *History of England*, which was to have covered the period from the accession of James II to the end of George IV's reign. Of the one hundred and forty-five years only fifteen were included in the five volumes which were completed. With the same proportion of details and rate of composition, fifty volumes would have been required, and one hundred and fifty years of labor.

His purpose was to write for all classes of readers, and to make history so interesting as to "supersede the last fashionable novel on the tables of young ladies." And in this extraordinary aim he won an extraordinary success. The *History* equaled in popularity the novels of Scott. Macaulay's idea of historical writing was to reproduce the past, give it life and action, set in motion before the eyes of the reader the grand pageant of historic persons and events. To accomplish this ideal he worked prodigiously. Not a sentence was allowed to stand until it was as intelligible to the humblest mechanic as to a prince of the realm. It was essentially true, as Thackeray said: "He reads twenty books to write a sentence; he travels a hundred miles to make one line of description."

History of England

For clearness, force, and brilliancy of narrative, the *History* is without a rival. Its limitations are obvious. Macaulay had no philosophy of history, no curiosity about the underlying and obscure causes of human activity. He was not a profound thinker nor a safe reasoner, and Whig prejudices and mental bias often led his judgment astray.

When Jeffrey, the editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, read the essay on *Milton* he wrote to Macaulay: "The more I think the less I can conceive where you picked up that style." The world still wonders at that style. Whether it is a safe or a dangerous model is one of the familiar topics of classroom discussion; certain it is that no other author has exercised upon literary composition so wide an influence through style alone. Macaulay's first principle is clearness, to which all other qualities must give precedence. He cuts up sentences into short, crisp statements; repeats the substantive to avoid ambiguous pronouns; and will have no qualifying *perhaps's* and *probably's*. Everything is positive and concrete. An abstract statement is repeated in concrete form, and amplified by illustrations from the inexhaustible stores of his memory. His paragraph-building is a

Character of his Style

fine art. To give point and force, antithesis and the balanced structure are used quite to excess, with the constant danger of trimming a little off the truth in order to make a neat epigram. Of Boswell he says:—

> If he had not been a great fool, he would never have been a great writer.

And of the Cavaliers:—

> They valued a prayer or a ceremony not on account of the comfort which it conveyed to themselves, but on account of the vexation which it gave to the Roundheads.

On the other hand, he gives the dignity of history to the most trivial detail that may be useful in filling in a background or emphasizing a quality. For example, King William's courtiers were—

> amused and shocked to see him, when the Princess Anne dined with him, and when the first green peas of the year were put on the table, devour the whole dish without offering a spoonful to her Royal Highness.

The chief defect of this style is its lack of relief. It is too persistently brilliant and stimulating. It lacks human warmth and sympathy. The passion is rhetorical, without spiritual uplift. There is little blending of colors in the pictures; character is painted black or white. Everywhere there is what Morley calls "edginess and inelasticity" in both matter and form. The clear-cut positiveness becomes oppressive. Preëminently the style is personal—a complete transcript of the character of Macaulay, a man of vast mental acquirements and narrow spiritual limitations, enslaved by facts and content with the surface appearance of life, never transfusing facts with spiritual significance or poetic beauty. To him a rain-cloud was a rain-cloud, and nothing more; never, as to Ruskin, an "angel of the sea." He hated a mystery and was merely tolerant of religion. Words-

Defects of his Style

worth's poetry was to him incomprehensible. Human history, as he knew it, is a splendid picture-book, infinitely entertaining, but containing no messages of solace for the human heart.

Thomas Carlyle

1795–1881

Macaulay, the panegyrist of his age, and Carlyle, its stern censor, present a striking contrast. The "unexampled prosperity" of England which Macaulay never wearied of glorifying was to Carlyle a cloak for social and moral degeneracy.

A Contrast

Macaulay was a utilitarian, seeking comfort and happiness in the progress of "useful arts" and material wealth; Carlyle was an idealist, condemning all machinery of civilization in which spiritual forces are not the motive power.

Thomas Carlyle was born in Ecclefechan, on the Scotch border, the son of a stone mason of sterling character, with speech "full of metaphors, though he knew not what metaphor was." The mother learned to write late in life in order that she might correspond with her son. At fourteen he walked the eighty miles to Edinburgh and entered the university. His father expected him to become a preacher, but after graduation he passed through a period of doubt and spiritual darkness from which he emerged a preacher of a strange gospel not recognized by the kirk. With grim determination he elected to become "a maker of books," although later he asserted that literature "should be the wine, not the food of life." For a few years he taught school, did hack-work for the Edinburgh publishers, and worked furiously in literary study, devoting himself especially to the German language and literature. Close work and a pinched diet in these years brought on the dyspepsia that was ever afterward his tormenting companion.

Early Years of Hard Study

In 1826 he married Jane Welsh, a beautiful, high-spirited woman, with "dangerous sparks of fire" and an intellectual brilliancy not inferior to his own. A domestic life of temperamental incompatibility began, the painful history of which was made unpleasantly public by the indiscreet friend and biographer Froude. There can be no doubt that Carlyle loved his wife to the full capacity of his "polar bear" nature and with a love that after her death became worship. And equally there can be no doubt that Mrs. Carlyle, with alternations of devotion and indignation, had sound reasons for her advice to a young friend: "Whatever you do, never marry a man of genius."

Mrs. Carlyle

THOMAS CARLYLE

For six years the Carlyles lived on a farm at Craigenputtock, a "gaunt and hungry Siberia," fifteen miles from a post-office. Here Carlyle withdrew into the solitude of study and thought, while Mrs. Carlyle loyally milked the cow, scrubbed the floors, and cooked the oatmeal. Few visitors ever came to cheer their pent-up souls, but once Emerson came, "one of the most lovable creatures we had ever looked on," and a lifelong friendship of great consequences began. Here Carlyle wrote most of his critical essays, including the famous essay on *Burns*, and here he concluded his struggle with the problem of existence and embodied his new philosophy in the strange treatise, *Sartor Resartus*.

Craigenputtock

Finding that the great human world beyond the Scotch

moors was necessary to him, he went to London, and settled for life in a modest house in Chelsea. Plain living and high thinking were reduced to "the art of living on nothing," while he battled with a hostile or indifferent public. Four courses of lectures were given with pecuniary success, one of which was published as *Heroes and Hero-Worship*. With the appearance of his *French Revolution* the public recognized the presence of a new and compelling genius, and henceforth the "sage of Chelsea" was the dominating figure in the literature of the age. Though his rugged nature was unfitted for friendships, the greatest scholars and authors gathered at No. 5 Cheyne Row, listening with the reverence of disciples to his astonishing monologues. In 1865 he was elected Lord Rector of Edinburgh University and his inaugural address, *On the Choice of Books*, was received with triumphant enthusiasm. While he was still in Scotland news reached him of Mrs. Carlyle's sudden death. His spirits were broken by the blow, and from that time to the end, in 1881, he did no important work.

A Long Struggle for Fame

Carlyle's first great literary service was to make the English people familiar with German literature. In this field he was a master, "almost more at home in our literature than ourselves," declared Goethe. In 1827 the essay on *Jean Paul Richter* was published in the *Edinburgh Review*, the first of a notable series of such studies. He translated Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* and wrote an excellent *Life of Schiller*. When he had fully kindled the fire of German thought in England, as he said, he decided "to take his bellows and blow elsewhere." On Boswell's *Johnson* he wrote an eloquent essay, finding a sympathetic kinship in Johnson's sturdy intellectualism and physical tribulations. An essay on *Diderot* led him to the theme of the French Revolution.

His Essays

In 1834 *Sartor Resartus* was printed in *Fraser's Magazine*, and was "mostly laughed at," says the stoical author. In America, through the friendly offices of Emerson, it was put into

book form and obtained its first favorable reading. Beneath an eccentric symbolism, the "philosophy of clothes," it presents the essence of Carlyle's philosophy of life. All visible things are emblems; matter is only the external covering of spirit; nature is "the living garment of God." So also the conventions and quackeries of politics, religion, and education are but clothes, for the most part badly tailored. The true life of man and of nature is the life of the spirit hidden within the material substance. With droll humor and paradox, the real man underneath the external frippery is exposed. The book is most interesting in its account of Carlyle's spiritual new birth, the struggle between the "Everlasting No," or spirit of doubt and despair, and the "Everlasting Yea," or spirit of belief that gives courage and strength to the soul.

Sartor Resartus

While preparing for his *French Revolution*, Carlyle wrote to a friend that he was about ready "to splash down what I know in large masses of color, that it may look like a smoke and flame conflagration in the distance." This is a fair description of his most famous book, which is a prose poem, a series of vivid and dramatic scenes rather than organized history. There are passages in it, says Birrell, that "appear to me to be the sublimest poetry of the century." To sterner critics like Brownell it appears to be "a caricature and libel." Between these extremes critical judgment has vibrated; meanwhile the book has become a popular classic. Here as nowhere else Carlyle's volcanic style was fitted to the theme, holding the reader spellbound with its tempestuous and lurid realism. Study this picture of Mirabeau:—

French Revolution

Which of these six hundred individuals, in plain white cravat, that have come up to regenerate France, might one guess would become their *King?* For a king or leader they, as all bodies of men, must have: be their work what it may, there is one man there who, by character, faculty, position, is fittest of all to do it; that man, as future not yet elected King, walks there among the rest. He with

the thick black locks, will it be? With the *hure*, as himself calls it, or black *boar's head*, fit to be "shaken" as a senatorial portent? Through whose shaggy beetle-brows, and rough-hewn, seamed, carbuncled face, there look natural ugliness, small-pox, incontinence, bankruptcy,—and burning fire of genius; like comet-fire glaring fuliginous through murkiest confusions? It is *Gabriel Honoré Riquetti de Mirabeau*, the world-compeller; man-ruling Deputy of Aix! According to the Baroness de Staël, he steps proudly along, though looked at askance here; and shakes his black *chevelure*, or lion's-mane; as if prophetic of great deeds.

Political and Historical Works

As "censor of the age" Carlyle poured forth in *Chartism* and the *Latter-day Pamphlets* his noble wrath and prophetic warnings against the cant, insincerity, shallow philosophies, and general "blockheadisms" of politics and society. He expressed a deep sympathy with the working people, but only contempt for government by the democratic mob. In *Heroes and Hero-Worship* he preached his gospel of reverence for great men, who as poets, preachers, or conquerors are the "real kings" of civilization, God-appointed leaders whom the people instinctively worship and obey. In *Past and Present* he painted a glowing picture of mediæval life for the purpose of a contrast unfavorable to the life of his own age. In *Cromwell's Letters and Speeches* he created a new interest in the great Puritan hero and placed him permanently on a higher pedestal of appreciation. His largest work is the *History of Frederick the Great*, in which he depicts his hero of blood and iron in too favorable colors, though acknowledging that he is "to the last a questionable hero." Upon this task Carlyle labored fourteen years, but in human worth it cannot be compared with the brief and tender *Life of John Sterling*, a beautiful memorial of friendship and a well-nigh perfect biography.

Carlyle taught a few simple, fundamental principles with powerful insistence, beating them into the consciousness of the age with sledge-hammer argument. The performance of duty, not the pursuit of happiness, is the aim of life. "*Would* in this world is a mere zero to *Should*." Blessedness is higher

than happiness. "Love not Pleasure; love God." Duty implies action, labor, sincerity. "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion!" Salvation comes through work. "Produce! Produce! Were it but the pitifulest infinitesimal fraction of a Product, produce it, in God's name!" This is the "Gospel of Work," which admits of no class distinctions of high and low. "The Sanspotato is of the selfsame stuff as the superfinest Lord Lieutenant." As social forces, right and might are ultimately identical. The best government is government by the best man, the ideal hero. The one central and all-comprehending force in human affairs is character.

Carlyle's Teaching

As a literary personage Carlyle is unique, a wild, uncouth product of the cold sky and sour soil of the Scotch moorlands—and "burning fire of genius"; deeply religious, worshiping God in nature and the godlike in man; a mighty preacher of righteousness, with words that are "flame images" of truth. The rugged face and shaggy brow suggest the elemental, Titanic, ungovernable nature. An irascible temper, made worse by dyspepsia, led to violent explosions of contemptuous criticism, with biting wit and humor sardonic and grim, that spared neither friend nor foe. Yet often, it is said, his ferocious denunciations would end in a huge laugh at his own grotesque excesses. "No one since Aristophanes," says Garnett, "has so inextricably interwoven drollery with poetry."

Personal Qualities

Beneath the roughness there were warm springs of pity, tenderness, and pathos. His chaotic style, a kind of barbaric English based upon the German method of word structure, excellent for the purpose of sensation and emphasis, is a mirror of his vast and turbulent intellectuality. He was not a philosopher, for he was too vehement to be always wise or consistent; he was a prophet engaged in noble exhortation, a stimulating and energizing force, a Promethean fire-bearer, kindling other minds to a wisdom more steadfast than his own.

John Ruskin

1819–1900

Another original and awakening force, like Carlyle, was his most distinguished disciple, John Ruskin, prose-poet and prophet of the beautiful in nature, art, and life. He was born in London and his childhood was spent in the suburb of Herne Hill. The father was a wealthy wine-merchant, with cultivated tastes and love of art, who never permitted his son "to look at a bad picture." The mother took charge of his early education, one part of which was to read the Bible through aloud, "hard names and all," once a year. To this resolute discipline he owed, he said, "much of my general power of taking pains and the best part of my taste in literature." He was brought up in isolation, without playmates, and thus became shy and morbidly sensitive, developing a sentimentalism that led to many painful experiences. He lived in books and dreams, absorbing from Scott's novels ideals of chivalry which were formative influences in all his work. Careful instruction in drawing and painting made him a proficient copyist. Accompanying his father in business journeys, he became familiar with English scenery and with the art treasures of the great mansions and galleries, and in frequent family trips to the Continent the foundations of his life-work were shaped.

Youth and Education

Love of nature with Ruskin was almost an inborn passion. When he was three and a half years old, the artist who was painting his portrait asked him what he would like for the background, and he replied, "blue hills." From his seventh year he wrote verse in profusion, mainly descriptive of scenery, in the Wordsworthian style. At thirteen a copy of Rogers's *Italy* with Turner's illustrations "determined the main tenor of my life," he says, and at fourteen his first view of the snowy Alps from Schaff-

Influence of Nature

hausen, "clear as crystal, sharp on the pure horizon, and tinged with rose of the sinking sun," was a vision that, like Gibbon's view of Rome, was the call to a great literary destiny. He there and then determined his life-work, "all of it that was to be sacred and useful." His passion for art was always secondary to his passion for nature. "Clouds and mountains have been life to me," he says.

He had written at seventeen a spirited vindication of Turner, then an obscure landscape-painter who had been treated contemptuously by the critics. Soon after leaving Oxford, at twenty-four, he produced the first volume of *Modern Painters*, in which he set out to prove the superiority of the moderns "in the art of landscape-painting to all the ancient masters by examples of the true, the beautiful, and the intellectual from the works of modern artists, especially from those of J. M. W. Turner." This bold voice of the young heretic, raised in behalf of a discredited innovator, created a sensation. Artists were astonished by the radical theories, and literary people were astonished by the beautiful vesture in which the theories were clothed. The main principle for which he argued was that painters should do away with traditions and conventions and study and copy nature directly with love, humility, and obedience.

Modern Painters, 1843–1860

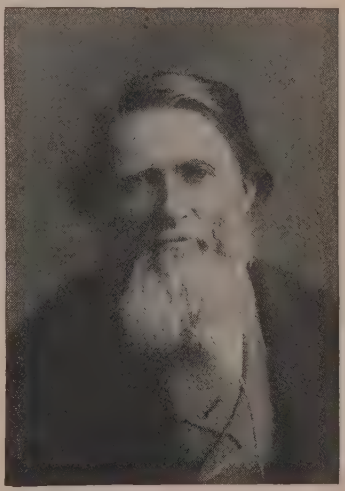
The work was epoch-making; it exalted Turner to the highest eminence of fame, and revolutionized theories of art. But readers were drawn to nature not by his arguments so much as by his marvelous descriptions, word-paintings unequaled elsewhere in English literature for beauty and eloquence. His method of revealing the beauty of external things through acute and sympathetic observation, precise and minute detail, and poetic illumination, was like the discovery of a new world. Only one who loved nature intensely could write about mosses in this manner:—

> Meek creatures! the first mercy of the earth, veiling with hushed softness its dintless rocks; creatures full of pity, covering with strange

and tender honor the sacred disgrace of ruin,—laying quiet finger on the trembling stones, to teach them rest. No words, that I know of, will say what these mosses are. None are delicate enough, none perfect enough, none rich enough. How is one to tell of the rounded bosses of furred and beaming green,—the starred divisions of rubied bloom, fine filmed, as if the Rock Spirits could spin porphyry as we do glass,—the traceries of intricate silver, and fringes of amber, lustrous, arborescent, burnished through every fibre into fitful brightness and glossy traverses of silken change, yet all subdued and pensive, and framed for simplest, sweetest offices of grace.

Ruskin was first a preacher of culture, secondly a preacher of social reform, and always a preacher of the moral law as the basis of beauty in art as well as of happiness in life. His most effective and enduring teaching is contained in the first three volumes of *Modern Painters*, and the two treatises on architecture, *Seven Lamps of Architecture* and *Stones of Venice*. All are written with distinct ethical motive. As Milton said of poetry, to produce pure and noble art the artist and his surroundings must be pure and noble. This is the basic principle of all Ruskin's criticism. With passionate satire and denunciation he inveighs against vulgarity and materialism, the greed for wealth, worship of "the great Goddess of 'Getting-on.'" The horrid smoke of Manchester is to him a defilement of God's temple and a symbol of the black misery of workingmen's lives. He abhors the brutality of war, and of that mimic war called "sport" in which

Ethical Teachings



JOHN RUSKIN

Englishmen, "who like the smell of gunpowder better than that of violets and thyme," slaughter pigeons and rabbits. Ruskin was a mediæval knight clothed in the shining armor of ideal truth, battling in vain against the hydra-headed monster, modern industrialism.

The latter half of Ruskin's life, his "second career," was devoted largely to fruitless philanthropic enterprises, the building of Utopias in which no one would dwell. Into schemes for improving the conditions of labor he lavishly poured his genius and his fortune. In organizing the Guild of St. George, a socialistic experiment, and in innumerable minor charities, he spent his inheritance of nearly £200,000. His social theories were put forth in *Fors Clavigera* (Ruskin's titles are usually cryptograms, not always decipherable), a series of letters addressed to workingmen. In *Unto this Last* he attacked the current theories of political economy and of wealth. "There is no wealth but life," he says. "That country is the richest which nourishes the greatest number of noble and happy human beings."

Philanthropic Efforts

His reform ideas were generally impracticable, often chimerical. He cried out against railroads and machinery, and people thought him mad. Yet it is remarkable how much of his teaching is now accepted and practiced; for example, the care for the health and comfort of laborers, national education, industrial schools, old-age pensions, and help for the unemployed. In 1870 he wrote: "The beauty which indeed is to be a joy forever must be a joy for all." To-day this altruistic sentiment is fundamental to all reforms.

The most widely popular of Ruskin's writings is the little book enigmatically entitled *Sesame and Lilies*, comprising two lectures, "Kings' Treasuries," an inspiring discussion of books and reading, and "Queens' Gardens," a sermon on the character and conduct of women, preached with exquisite grace. He wrote upon the most diverse themes, but always with impassioned

Sesame and Lilies, and Other Books

appeals for higher ideals of life. *Construction of Sheepfolds* is an appeal for Christian brotherhood. *Queen of the Air* deals with the poetry of Greek myths. *Ethics of the Dust* is a quaint fantasy about crystals. *Love's Meinie* is about birds, and *The Crown of Wild Olive* discourses upon work, trade, and honorable conduct. His last production, *Præterita*, is a delightful autobiography, written "frankly, garrulously, and at ease," he says, to please himself.

Personal Qualities

Ruskin was "one of the most fascinating and impressive beings whom I ever met," says his friend and biographer, Frederic Harrison. His life, zealously devoted to the good of his fellow men, was filled with sadness and the bitterness of disappointment and failure. With frail body, precarious health, and exhausting nervous energy, he gave himself with reckless generosity to humanity, and received in return scorn, derision, and cruel wounds in his sensitive spirit. He thought nobly, but reasoned badly; his judgments were eccentric, arbitrary, emotional, colored by prejudice, and lacking in essential knowledge. He would not visit America because he "could not, even for a couple of months, live in a country so miserable as to possess no castles." We laugh at such half-truths and unreasoned whims, yet our souls are enriched by the idealism of such a man, "a man saturated more than any priest with the words of Scripture and the ideal of the Gospel, who burns like any St. Francis to make them again real guides to living men on earth."

Walter Pater, 1839–1894

Another apostle of æsthetics and master of beautiful prose, Walter Pater, is sharply contrasted with Ruskin in the condensed product of his genius, intellectual tranquillity, and serene critical judgment. Two or three small volumes contain his message, an incitement to finer ideals in artistic and spiritual things. In his *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* he seeks to interpret the essential ideals of that great awakening in art, literature,

and philosophy. *Appreciations* is a collection of literary studies, brilliant and penetrating in critical insight. The most impressive and complete expression of his genius is the philosophical romance, *Marius the Epicurean*, a sympathetic study of the conflict between pagan and Christian ideals of life in the period of Marcus Aurelius.

Pater was a scholarly recluse, fellow of Brasenose College, Oxford, detached in his interests from contemporary thought, inclined to dwell with the splendors of early art and the mysteries of early religious faith. His spirit lived in the past, which he viewed through a kind of golden haze of mystical, speculative thought. His strongest passion, probably, was his eagerness for perfection of style. The work of composition was to him a slow, sensitive, painstaking process, like miniature-painting. The product was an expression packed with subtle thought, delicate in discrimination, abounding in finely wrought phrases, and rhythmic in movement. In the prose-fantasy, *The Child in the House*, his art counterfeits the effects of music, producing "one of the purest pieces of word-melody in the language," in the judgment of Benson, who defines his style succinctly as "richness under severe restraint."

A Prose Artist

Art and literature were to Pater a luxury in which he indulged with free delight. He did not aim to make his studies systematic or comprehensive, but like the free-winged bee he sipped the sweetness of art and philosophy in widely remote fields, obedient only to the caprice of his own tastes.

John Henry Newman

1801–1890

A typical embodiment of the Victorian spirit of unrest,—the tendency inherited from the French Revolution to question all authority, beliefs, and institutions,—was the so-called Oxford

Movement, a theological controversy conducted by Oxford scholars who wrote *Tracts for the Times*, from which arose also the name Tractarian Movement. The dispute was between the Broad Church party, under whose "liberalizing" influence the church seemed to be losing its sanctity and spiritual power, and the High Church party, who sought to increase the authority and purify the spiritual life of the church. It began in the preaching of John Keble, revered in literature as the author of the *Christian Year*.

The Oxford Movement

The leading figure in the movement was John Henry Newman, the most eminent spiritual force of the period, whose studies in the history and doctrines of the church carried him finally over to the Church of Rome, in which he became a Cardinal. He was a fellow of Oriel College, and a university preacher. The influence of his preaching, as described by contemporaries, was almost phenomenal,—simple, direct, without eloquence, producing its effects mainly through a beautiful personality that exercised upon all who were in contact with it a sort of mysterious fascination. His presence, it is said, seemed to hallow the very air of Oxford, and when he retired into monastic seclusion his spiritual presence still brooded over the place like the hovering of unseen angels.

A Beautiful Character

Of Newman's forty volumes of historical and theological writing only a few belong to literature. An unseemly attack upon his motives and beliefs by Charles Kingsley called forth his *Apologia pro Vita Sua*, a kind of spiritual biography, which revealed a personality of the deepest and holiest sincerity, and won for his character the admiration of thousands who could not accept his opinions. A collection of lectures and essays, *The Idea of a University*, contains much broad-minded and inspiring thought about education, and the *Sermons* are a distinctly choice part of religious literature. He was a poet, as the famous hymn, *Lead, Kindly Light*, testifies.

Literary Work

It is as a prose stylist that Newman is now chiefly commended for study. He defines style as "a thinking out into language," which exactly describes his own style. It is pure, simple, and transparent; there is no ornament for ornament's sake, but there is beauty and poetic imagery and imaginative vision. Observe the effect of these simple monosyllables:—

Style

> Bright as is the sun, and the sky, and the clouds; green as are the leaves and the fields; sweet as is the singing of the birds; we know that they are not all, and we will not take up with a part for the whole. They proceed from a center of love and goodness, which is God Himself.

And compare these imaginative and rhythmic lines about angels:—

> Whenever we look abroad, we are reminded of those gracious and holy Beings, the servants of the Holiest, who deign to minister to the heirs of salvation. Every breath of air and ray of light and heat, every beautiful prospect, is, as it were, the skirts of their garments, the waving of the robes of those whose faces see God in heaven.

Newman followed always the counsel of Sidney's muse, "Look in thy heart and write." The force of his style, as of his character, is its deep and pure sincerity.

Matthew Arnold

1822–1888

Literary students of the present generation are only vaguely aware of their obligations to Matthew Arnold for literary principles which, universally recognized now, were practically unknown before the publication of *Essays in Criticism*, in 1865. In this book a new method for the study and critical interpretation of literature was revealed, and henceforth the old method of arbitrary and omniscient severity practiced by the Edinburgh school of critics fell into discredit and disuse.

Arnold was the founder of a new criticism, which he defined as "a disinterested endeavor to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world." Criticism must be open-minded and sympathetic, tempered with "sweet reasonableness," and above all it must be truthful, endeavoring with sincerity to "see things as in themselves they are." It must be "a free play of the mind on all subjects which it touches," free from prejudice and all interested motives other than the desire for truth. The critic must not only judge and furnish standards of judgment, but he must penetrate to the real purpose of the author whom he interprets and determine the degree to which that purpose has been realized. Since great literature, especially poetry, aims to interpret human thought and feeling, it is in reality a "criticism of life." Thus the functions of critic and author are united.

The New Criticism

MATTHEW ARNOLD

These precepts Arnold enforced by his own example in a series of critical essays that are inspiring and authoritative. No other English critic has possessed his almost infallible taste, and his power of clairvoyant insight, discriminating analysis, and precise valuation of literary qualities. No such criticism has been known elsewhere, except in the work of Sainte-Beuve in France, whom Arnold regarded as his master. He did for literary criticism what Ruskin did for art criticism—he gave it a new soul.

Arnold as Literary Critic

In his own period, however, Arnold was most conspicuous as a critic of social and religious life. Like Carlyle and Ruskin, he deplored the materializing tendency of the age, and labored to establish finer conceptions of life, to set up the goal of culture, and to make "sweetness and light" prevail. This was the central theme and underlying purpose of all his work. Culture he defines as the "harmonious expansion of all the powers which make the beauty and worth of human nature":—

An Apostle of Culture

> Culture is a study of perfection, and of harmonious perfection, general perfection, and perfection which consists in becoming something rather than in having something, in an inward condition of the mind and spirit, not in an outward set of circumstances.

This gospel of culture was expounded especially in *Culture and Anarchy*, a volume of satirical and acute criticism, in which he described the sport-loving, horse-racing English aristocrats as "Barbarians," and the narrow-minded, commercialized middle class as "Philistines." His brilliant and audacious theological criticism, in *Literature and Dogma*, and *God and the Bible*, aroused spirited controversy. His earnest effort was to rescue Christianity from the assault of scientific materialism on the one hand and from the bondage of a narrow and rigid theology on the other, to show that religion is a natural and necessary part of human experience, not dependent on creeds and dogmas.

The force of Arnold's criticism was due in large measure to a remarkably lucid style. It is as clear a style as Macaulay's and more interesting. Pungent wit and humorous satire give edge to his speech, and a gracious manner precludes offense. "There was plenty of salt in his wit and not much pepper." A trick of repetition, excellent for emphasis, is sometimes tiresomely overworked. Arnold did not indulge in ornament or prose poetry, but he was exceedingly skillful in summarizing his themes in felicitous phrases which stick in the memory.

Arnold's Prose Style

Arnold was not merely a critic of literature and society, but

was a practical and enthusiastic educator. For thirty-five years he was an inspector of schools, performing the burdensome duties with an unremitting zeal for the public good. Three times he was sent abroad by the government to study and report on continental systems of education. The pedagogical bent was an inheritance. He was the son of Dr. Thomas Arnold, of Rugby, England's most famous schoolmaster. At Rugby and Oxford he acquired that perfection of classical scholarship which determined the character of both his thinking and his writing. He won a scholarship in Balliol, took university prizes, including the Newdigate prize for poetry, and in 1845 was elected to a fellowship in Oriel, where the echoes of Newman's voice still lingered. From 1857 to 1867 he was Professor of Poetry at Oxford. He was himself the typical and finest flower of the Oxford soil, and the lifelong affection with which his "eye travels down to Oxford's towers" is tender and beautiful—"home of lost causes and forsaken hopes," who "by her ineffable charm keeps ever calling us near to the true goal of all of us, to the ideal, to perfection."

Arnold as an Educator

Conspicious as Arnold's prose still is and must long remain, it is likely that his ultimate fame will rest upon his poetry. It is fitting, therefore, that as a poet he should be discussed in the fellowship of the poets of the period.

PROGRAM OF WORK

CLASS READING. MACAULAY: *Essays*, two of the following: Milton, Addison, Bacon, Johnson, Warren Hastings: *History of England*, chs. iii and ix; Selections in Craik and Manly; *Lays: Horatius; Virginia.*

CARLYLE: *Essay on Burns; Heroes and Hero-Worship*, VI (The Hero as King); *French Revolution*, vol. I, bk. v, ch. vi; *Sartor Resartus*, bk. II, chs. vii–ix, bk. III, ch. vi; *Past and Present*, bk. III, chs. x–xiii. Selections in Century, Craik, Manly.

RUSKIN: *Sesame and Lilies;* Traffic (in *Crown of Wild Olives*); Selections from *Modern Painters* (Eng. Cl. Series), or *Modern Painters*,

vol. I, pt. ii, sec. 3 (Truth of Clouds), sec. 5 (Truth of Water); *Stones of Venice*, vol. III, ch. iv.

PATER: The Child in the House; Leonardo da Vinci (in *The Renaissance*).

NEWMAN: *Idea of a University*, Discourse VI. Selections in Century, Craik, Manly.

ARNOLD: The Study of Poetry (Introduction to Ward's Poets); Essay on Wordsworth; *Culture and Anarchy* (Eng. Cl. Series), especially chapters on "Sweetness and Light" and "Barbarians, Philistines, Populace."

BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM. Trevelyan's *Life and Letters of Macaulay;* Morrison's *Macaulay* (E. M. L.); Sedgwick's *Essays on Great Writers;* Stephen's *Hours in a Library;* Bagehot's *Literary Studies;* Minto's *English Prose Literature* (Macaulay, Carlyle); Nichol's *Carlyle* (E. M. L.); Garnett's *Carlyle* (G. W.); Froude's *Carlyle;* Froude's *Jane Welsh Carlyle;* Norton's *Carlyle's Letters and Reminiscences;* Lowell's *My Study Windows;* Brownell's *Victorian Prose Masters* (Carlyle, Arnold, Ruskin); Harrison's *Tennyson, Ruskin, Mill, and other Estimates;* MacMechan's *Heroes and Hero-Worship* (Athenæum); Harrison's *Ruskin* (E. M. L.); Benson's *Ruskin;* Cook's *Ruskin;* W. M. Rossetti's *Ruskin, Rossetti, and Pre-Raphaelitism;* Robertson's *Modern Humanists* (Ruskin, Arnold); Saintsbury's *Corrected Impressions* (Ruskin, Arnold, Macaulay); Scudder's *Introduction to Writings of Ruskin;* Benson's *Pater* (E. M. L.); Greenslet's *Pater;* Gosse's *Critical Kit-Kats;* Hale's *Selections from Pater* (English Readings); Hutton's *Newman;* Ward's *Newman;* Church's *The Oxford Movement;* Lilly's *Essays and Speeches;* Shairp's *Studies in Poetry and Philosophy;* Gates's *Selections from Newman* (Athenæum); Paul's *Arnold* (E. M. L.); Saintsbury's *Arnold;* Russell's *Letters of Arnold;* Woodberry's *Makers of Literature;* Gates's *Three Studies in Literature* (Arnold, Newman); Dowden's *Transcripts and Studies;* Burroughs's *Light of Day;* Gates's *Selections from Arnold* (Athenæum).

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION AND RESEARCH

1. Account for the popularity of Macaulay's writings. 2. Why is Macaulay regarded as an unsafe model for young writers? 3. Read and report the substance of his essay on the poet Montgomery. 4. Why is the *History* unreliable? 5. Compare Macaulay's style with Lamb's, with Thackeray's.

6. Make a study of Carlyle's ruggedness. 7. A picture of the Carlyles at Craigenputtock. 8. Difference between Macaulay's historical method and Carlyle's. 9. Carlyle's purpose in *Sartor Resartus*

(consult MacMechan's edition, Athenæum Series). 10. Discuss Huxley's description of Carlyle: "A great tonic, a source of intellectual invigoration and moral stimulus." 11. Merits of Carlyle's style.

12. Points of likeness between Ruskin and Carlyle. 13. Select passages, in *Modern Painters*, that best illustrate Ruskin's descriptive style. 14. Read and discuss the lecture on Work. 15. Ruskin's theory of woman's education and influence (*Sesame and Lilies*).

16. Select passages from *Marius the Epicurean* that illustrate Pater's beauty of style and delicacy of thought. 17. Newman at Oxford (consult biographies).

18. Explain Arnold's ideals of culture. 19. Make a list of Arnold's striking words and phrases, especially in *Culture and Anarchy*, that embody his main ideas. 20. Account for the stimulating effect of Arnold's writings.

CHAPTER XX

VICTORIAN POETRY

Although the Victorian age is regarded as an age of prose, its main intellectual and spiritual impulses have undoubtedly found their most enduring expression in poetry. But the age produced no single poem like the *Faerie Queene* or *Paradise Lost*. The grand epic requires a certain unity of national life and sentiment for its creation. Complexity and intellectual strife were the dominant notes of Victorian life; and the poetry, in its wide diversity of form and spirit, faithfully recorded this complexity.

Elements of Victorian Poetry

The more prominent elements of Victorian poetry are an increasing tendency toward humanitarianism, a definite sympathy with the poorer classes; the spirit of democracy and human equality; the spirit of individualism, in thought and art, hostile to authority and precedent; new conceptions of life and the disturbance of religious faith introduced by science; the love of nature for its own sake, leading to a new type of idyllic poetry; and finally a reversion to classical and mediæval poetic types. The age lacked the vigor and buoyancy of the Elizabethan age and the serene complacency of the Augustan age. Its thought was more introspective, more profound and wise. The Elizabethans were content to be a part of the great spectacle of human life, actors in its exciting drama; the Augustans viewed the spectacle objectively and critically; the Victorians, intensely curious about its meaning, viewed life as philosophers, rather than as spectators at a play.

A group of poets representing the profoundest feelings of the period is known as the Meditative School, in which Matthew Arnold and Arthur Hugh Clough are the leading figures. By kindred temperament Tennyson belongs in this group, but his larger and more varied achievement places him in a class by himself. "The poets of this group," says Stedman, "are characterized by seriousness, reflection, earnestness, and, withal, by religious faith, or by impressive, conscientious bewilderment among the mighty problems of modern thought." The prevailing tone of these poets is melancholy, the melancholy of all sensitive souls, as Tennyson said, who "sit apart, holding no form of creed, but contemplating all." Their thought represents the earlier phases of the scientific era, before any settled reconciliation between the old and the new ideas was possible. To many, as to Arnold, there seemed to be no way of extricating the mind from the "hopeless tangle of this age," no cure for—

The Meditative School

> this strange disease of modern life,
> With its sick hurry, its divided aims,
> Its heads o'ertaxed, its palsied hearts.

There appeared to be no solution of the problem except stoic endurance. Even nature "seems to bear, rather than rejoice."

Arnold's large classical training and his revulsion of feeling against the turmoil of the times turned him to the Greeks for his ideals of art and of life. In the simplicity and repose of the ancients he found relief and inspiration. His poetry is all a studied reflection of Greek art. It is serious in thought, classic in dignity, lyric in spirit, and suffused with a pensive melancholy. The depressing tone and the severe simplicity of the art limit its appeal to readers of kindred culture. His early experiments in the Greek dramatic form, *Empedocles on Ætna* and *Merope*, were failures, being too cold and austere for English taste. Most truly representa-

Arnold's Poetry

tive of his qualities are the short poems, such as *Dover Beach*, *A Summer Night*, *Lines Written in Kensington Garden*, *Rugby Chapel*, and the poems in memory of Obermann. He was an intense lover of nature, and an avowed disciple of Wordsworth, but he did not find in nature Wordsworth's "healing power." In *The Strayed Reveller* and *The Forsaken Merman* he shakes off his melancholy for the moment and allows his fancy to frolic in melodious and charming rhythms. The poem *Sohrab and Rustum* is a magnificent piece of epic narrative in the manner of Homer.

Arnold's finest poetic gift was elegiac, and his finest poems are *The Scholar Gipsy* and its sequel *Thyrsis*, tender memorials of his college friend, Arthur Hugh Clough. *Thyrsis*, though not so lofty an elegy as *Lycidas* or *Adonais*, is more genuine and intimate in its feeling. The background of natural scenery is exquisitely painted, lovingly reminiscent of Oxford's "dreaming towers" and the surrounding landscape. Though classic in form and phrase, the poems are modern in spirit, revealing the feverish life of the day, saddened with "waiting for the spark from heaven to fall." The idyllic simplicity and charm of the opening stanzas of *The Scholar Gipsy* are worthy of Theocritus, to whom Arnold was most indebted.

Elegiac Poems

Clough, like Arnold, was a student of Balliol, and fellow of Oriel; a scholar of brilliant promise, who seems to have impressed every one with the gentle, winsome personality revealed in *Thyrsis*. He was more deeply affected even than Arnold by the Oxford controversy, and long struggled painfully with his skeptical meditations, but finally reëstablished his faith, in the spirit of the lyric, "Say not the struggle nought availeth." Hardly any other poet is so personal, so entirely introspective, engaged so exclusively with the workings of his own perplexed soul. Doubt to him was pain; to grasp "the high white star of truth" was his passion.

Arthur Hugh Clough, 1819–1861

Why should I say I see the things I see not?
Why be and be not?
Show love for that I love not, and fear for what I fear not?
And dance about to music that I hear not?

Clough could draw at times upon a fund of racy humor, as in the vulgar rich man's soliloquy about the pleasures of money, in *Spectator ab Extra*. The *Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich*, a "long-vacation pastoral," is an experiment with dactylic hexameters, less successful than Kingsley's, but interesting in passages of musing sentiment, of devoted nature-worship, and of the refreshing idealism of youth. Absorbed in his meditations, Clough was too careless in his art, and left upon his work the marks of immaturity. His thought suffers through inadequate expression. For this reason, as Brooke observes, his poetry "remains in the porch, not in the temple of the muses."

His Imperfect Art

Another of this group of poets is Francis Turner Palgrave, gratefully known to all students of poetry as editor of the "Golden Treasury." In such lyrics as *Agnoto Theo* and *The Reign of Law*, the spiritual trial of the period is faithfully recorded. The sweetly pensive songs of Richard Monckton Milnes (Lord Houghton), like *The Brookside* and *Strangers Yet*, ought not to be overlooked. And with the poets of this school another gentle poet should be associated—Edward Fitzgerald, loved by all the world for his translation, from the Persian, of the *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*, in which we hear across the centuries the spiritual murmurings of troubled souls, in verse of a melody and tender grace seldom found elsewhere in English poetry.

Palgrave, 1824–1897. Milnes, 1809–1885. Fitzgerald, 1809–1883

Alfred Tennyson

1809–1892

The supreme poet of the Victorian age is Tennyson, most comprehensive as the representative of the age, most eminent

in influence upon the life and art of the age. In his poetry is mirrored not only the age, but the nation; he is the home poet of the race, of all the great English poets the most completely English.

Alfred Tennyson was born at Somersby, in Lincolnshire, in 1809, the birth-year of Gladstone, Darwin, Lincoln, and Holmes. His father was rector of the parish, a man of cultivation in literature and the arts, but severe in temper and subject to a morbid melancholy that cast its shadow upon the poet's temperament. Two brothers, Frederick and Charles, became poets of some distinction. At seven Alfred was sent to a school at Louth, where his sensitive nature was cruelly abused by the rough treatment of master and boys, in the usual manner of those days. With his brother Charles he entered Cambridge in 1828. In partnership with this brother he had already published a little volume entitled *Poems by Two Brothers*, in which there is not the faintest indication of his future qualities. It was merely a sign of poetic enthusiasm.

A Family of Poets

At the university Tennyson was noted for his imposing figure, gravity and reticence of manner, and for genial humor and brilliancy of speech, when he could be induced to talk. He belonged to a society of young Radicals, called "The Apostles," but was too shy to take part in the debates. Among his companions were several men who became distinguished—Lord Houghton, Dean Alford, Dean Merivale, Archbishop Trench, Spedding, the editor of Bacon, and his dearest friend, Arthur Henry Hallam, who was to his mind "as near perfection as mortal man could be." In his second year he won the Chancellor's prize for a poem on *Timbuctoo*, rich in crude pictorial splendors and musings of a contemplative imagination, indicating clearly the lines of his future development. As he was too diffident to deliver the poem himself, it was read by his friend Merivale.

At Cambridge

Owing apparently to family difficulties, Tennyson left the

university without his degree, and at Somersby gave himself entirely to reading and poetic dreaming, "sometimes moping to myself like an owl in an ivy bush, sometimes smoking a pipe with a neighboring parson." In 1830 and 1832 he published small volumes of poems, which were cut up by the critics in true Edinburgh fashion. In 1833 the death of Arthur Hallam plunged him into the deepest gloom. For ten years he was silent, years devoted strictly to the perfecting of his art. He was seldom seen even by his friends. Carlyle describes him at this time as "a man solitary and sad, dwelling in an element of gloom, carrying a bit of chaos about him which he is manufacturing into cosmos."

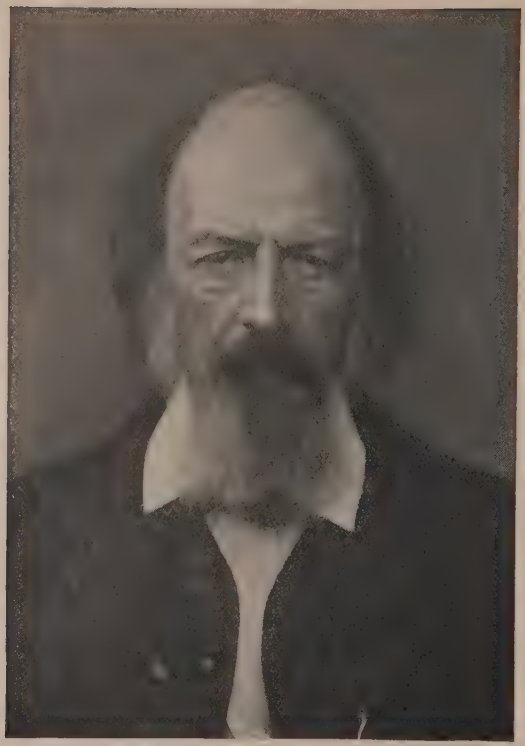
Poems of 1830 and 1832

The critics had correctly indicated one radical defect in his early poetry, the lack of real substance in his melodious "Claribels" and "airy, fairy Lilians." When he next appeared with *Poems*, in 1842, he had deepened his thought and strengthened his grasp on artistic forms. There were two volumes, one containing such of the earlier poems as his maturer taste would preserve, the other containing new poems, many of them the finest he ever wrote. Among these were the charming idyllic pictures of English life, like *The Gardener's Daughter*, *Dora*, and *Locksley Hall*, which completely won the hearts of his people. In this second volume appeared also *Morte d'Arthur*, noble intimation of the grand Arthurian epics that were to come, and *Ulysses*, that flawless gem executed in the Greek manner, the closing line of which expressed his own dominant mood in this period of depression, "strong in will"—

Poems of 1842

> To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

Tennyson was now acknowledged to be the foremost poet in England. He received a government pension of £200, which relieved him from vexing poverty. In 1847 his popularity was increased by the publication of *The Princess*. The year 1850 was



ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

his climactic year, his *annus mirabilis*. *In Memoriam*, his profoundest poem, if not his masterpiece, was published; he was appointed poet laureate, to succeed Wordsworth; and his marriage to Emily Sellwood, delayed thirteen years, now brought into his troubled life, he said, "the peace of God." Henceforth his career was one of uninterrupted happiness and loyal public fame. Far-

The Year 1850

ringford, on the Isle of Wight, became his home, "far from noise and smoke of town"—

> Close to the ridge of a noble down.

Like Horace, he hated the "vulgar throng," and lived in the seclusion of nature and poetic thought. On the "noble down," which overlooked the ocean, it was his wont to walk daily alone, in silent communion with the universe. Later he built Aldworth, a still more secluded home in Sussex. Public honors came to him, more than he would accept. In 1884 he was made a peer and took his seat in the House of Lords. Like a gentle and shaded stream his tranquil years flowed on to the final union with the illimitable sea. At eighty-one he wrote the beautiful hymn of resignation, *Crossing the Bar*. Two years later he died, with a volume of Shakespeare in his hand; and was laid in the great Abbey by the side of Browning, in front of Chaucer's tomb.

Secluded Life and Public Fame

The distinctive quality of Tennyson's genius is lyrical. He lacked the large constructive sense required for the epic. His dramas — as dramas — were failures. The idyl, a form peculiarly fitted to his genius, is essentially lyrical. The world prizes most, not the long poems, but the incomparably sweet and haunting lyric strains—

A Lyric Poet

> Short swallow-flights of song, that dip
> Their wings in tears, and skim away.

From *Claribel* to *Crossing the Bar*, a period of sixty years, this gift of melody suffered no real impairment. But the range of the lyric emotion expressed in his poetry is limited. He had none of Shelley's flaming aspiration, none of the passionate abandon of Byron and Burns. His muse was always forethoughtful, deliberate, and inclined most naturally to tender melancholy—

> Music that gentler on the spirit lies
> Than tir'd eyelids on tir'd eyes.

He proves Shelley's saying that "Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought." His grandest poem is an elegy; his finest ode is a funeral hymn; his most intense songs are saturated with tears; his most romantic flights, like *The Lady of Shalott*, even the great romantic cycle of the *Idylls of the King*, are concluded in infinite sadness.

The Princess, 1847

There can be no doubt that *The Princess* was a disappointment to the poet's friends and the public. His genius was ripe for producing a work of great dignity, and he produced a dissertation on woman's rights, in mock heroics. The sub-title, "A Medley," was an apology for the strange mixture of seriousness and farce, geological picnics, a woman's college, and a mediæval tournament. The moral of the poem is that the woman's problem finds its wisest solution in love and marriage; not in an independence that would substitute knowledge for love, but in a partnership of mutual effort for development:—

> The woman's cause is man's; they rise or sink
> Together, dwarf'd or godlike, bond or free.

In spite of the hackneyed theme, the poem is a popular favorite. "Other works of the poet are greater," says Stedman, "but none is so fascinating." It fascinates by its marvelous richness of artistic ornament, "jewels five words long" sown lavishly over its pages, its pictures of magical coloring, and more than all by the interspersed songs of perfect art and immortal charm.

The noblest memorial of friendship ever constructed by the poet's art is *In Memoriam*, an elegy unlike any other in our literature. Soon after the death of Hallam, Tennyson began to write the separate lyrics of which the elegy is composed,

In Memoriam, 1850

and he continued the composition through sixteen years. All moods of personal grief and all phases of the problem of life, death, and immortality, are deeply meditated in "these brief lays, of sorrow born," and the whole is permeated with profound religious feeling. The re-

ligious experience of the age is embodied in the poem. The thought progresses from a state of doubt and spiritual despair, through faltering belief that can but "faintly trust the larger hope," to a final declaration of faith in—

> That God, which ever lives and loves,
> One God, one law, one element,
> And one far-off divine event,
> To which the whole creation moves.

The seven hundred and twenty-five uniform four-line stanzas, grouped in separate songs like chaplets of pure pearls, are

TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE
The college of Byron, Tennyson, Macaulay, and Thackeray

managed with infinite skill to secure a varied interest in the single theme. If the thought is at times obscure, it is due to compression required by the stanza, as well as to the impenetrable mystery of things "behind the veil."

The most unsatisfactory of the long poems is *Maud*, a disagreeable tale of crime, avarice, and insanity, in which the poet,

like a morbid Hamlet, rails at the times that are out of joint, and commends war as a remedy. Artistically, however, the poem is one of Tennyson's most remarkable creations. It is a monodrama, in which "different phases of passion in one person take the place of different characters." The varying passion is expressed in a series of lyrics of uneven quality, some of the finest and some of the poorest the poet ever wrote. The song, "Come into the garden, Maud," in purity of passion and beauty of phrase, he never surpassed.

Maud, 1855

Tennyson accomplished what Milton dreamed of, a large epical work drawn from Arthurian romance. His crowning achievement is the *Idylls of the King*. He was dallying with the theme as early as 1832, as shown by *The Lady of Shalott*, *Sir Galahad*, the fragmentary *Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere*, and the splendid *Morte d'Arthur*, which became the conclusion of the completed work. From 1858 to 1872 the *Idylls* were given to the public at intervals, and finally the twelve poems were combined in a cycle. The connecting thread of the epics is the personality of King Arthur, who strives to establish an ideal kingdom based on noble standards of life, and is defeated by the treachery of his most trusted subjects. There is an "allegorical drift" in the poems, as the author called it, "shadowing sense at war with soul"; that is to say, the struggle of the human soul in its passage through life to death and immortality. The Round Table is "an image of the mighty world." But the delightful glamour of romance should not be destroyed by too close search for hidden meanings.

Idylls of the King, 1858–1872

The material of the tales was found in Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*, and used with great freedom. Without regard for historic consistency, Tennyson invests his primitive people with all the trappings of highly developed civilization, endowing them with all the intellectual subtleties of the modern mind. It is ancient

Modernized Chivalry

Camelot parading the fashions of modern London. But in the presence of such splendors of romantic poetry one does not question what Arthur and his Round Table may have been in reality.

In old age Tennyson was seized with an unfortunate determination to write dramas, in which he persisted against the advice of friendly critics and in face of repeated failure on the stage. The most worthy of his plays are *Harold*, *Becket*, and *Queen Mary*, forming a historical trilogy, in which he aimed to illustrate "the making of England." The quality of these plays is lyric rather than dramatic; he could not create swift action, tragic passion, and the living influence of one character on another, elements necessary to dramatic effect.

Dramas

Perfection of form was a passion with Tennyson; the artistic element was always foremost in his work. No other poet except Milton is so uniformly perfect. The Tennysonian style is unlike any other style. Its defect, if any, is to be "faultily faultless" like the face of his beautiful heroine. His poetry is a garden blooming with perpetual delights. What witchery of words and golden phrases, what melodious cadencies, and subtle blendings of sound and sense! The voices of nature he loved to imitate:—

Tennyson's Art

> Myriads of rivulets hurrying thro' the lawn,
> The moan of doves in immemorial elms,
> And murmuring of innumerable bees.

He was tireless in his refining processes, rewriting a song as many as seventeen times. The variety of metrical forms which he adapted or invented is astonishing. His blank-verse songs are unique in their peculiar loveliness; in such songs as "Tears, idle tears" and "Come down, O Maid," one does not notice the absence of rhyme, so exquisite is the art. To blank verse, the noblest of English measures, he gave new excellencies of grace, simplicity, and flexibility, showing a wide departure

from the sonorous grandeur of Milton. He loved the plain Saxon words and with simple monosyllables could work miracles of melody, as in the songs of *The Princess*. Precision of detail is everywhere characteristic of his art, a devotion to the beauty and revealing power of minute facts.

Personal Qualities

Tennyson was a lover of nature, but nature did not possess for him, as for Wordsworth, a soul responsive to the soul of man. He loved nature as a beautiful picture, a splendid background, enriched with human associations, and he described it with an accuracy quite unparalleled. His interest in humanity was wide in range, including the rustic northern farmer and the daughter of the gardener, as well as the "daughter of a hundred earls," but this interest was more intellectual than humanitarian. He dreamed of an enlightened democracy in which the "common sense of most" shall rule, but he was in reality a thorough aristocrat. He wrote patriotic songs that stir English hearts—*The Charge of the Light Brigade* and *The Defense of Lucknow*—but his patriotism was a placid passion. He was deeply interested in the scientific movement, and was the first to reconcile science and poetry, to assimilate its theories and processes and make them a part of poetic thought. Throughout his poetry the doctrine of evolution is accepted as the law of progress for the individual and for society. In general, Tennyson absorbed and reflected current thought with great fullness, but he was not a revealer of new truth, not a prophet or seer. The chief message of his poetry is a persuasive summons to qualify and soften the materialism of our lives with beauty, grace, and ideality.

Robert Browning

1812–1889

The fame of Robert Browning has increased so much in recent years that he now disputes with Tennyson the honors

of Victorian supremacy. The two poets, possibly equally great, are so totally unlike as to make comparison impossible except by contrast; and the points of sharp contrast are innumerable. For example, in the one matter of expression, Tennyson is always the artist first, rigidly subduing thought and emotion to the restraint of artistic form; Browning is always the thinker first, and careless of art. Tennyson is dainty in his tastes and repelled by ugliness; Browning is tolerant of everything that lives, and offends without scruple the nerves of refined taste. "If the poetry of the one is like a velvety lawn, that of the other resembles the rock bed of a river, testifying in every inch to the violence and velocity of the intellectual torrent which formed it."

Tennyson and Browning

Robert Browning was born in 1812 at Camberwell, a suburb of London. From early infancy he possessed a wilful and turbulent nature, strangely susceptible to the influences of music, painting, and poetry. At twelve he completed a volume of poems, titled "Incondita," imitations of Byron, which in due time went to the fire instead of a publisher. His education was conducted at home by a private tutor. For a short time only he attended a Greek class in London University. His father's library of some six thousand volumes was his university. He was trained also in music, dancing, fencing, and riding. Law, music, and painting were discussed as possible professions, but the father willingly assented to his desire to devote himself to pure culture, whatever might be the issue.

Childhood and Education

The first poetic influence felt by Browning was that of Byron. His next youthful passion was for Shelley, whose poems were obtained for him by his mother after wide search among the booksellers of London. In 1833 his first work, *Pauline*, was published, at the expense of a benevolent aunt. It is a remarkable poem for a youth of twenty-one, and shows the influence of Shelley, who is apostrophized in the poem—

Early Poems and Plays

Sun-treader, life and light be thine forever!

The poem attracted no attention. Two years later *Paracelsus* was published with similar discouragement. But the curiosity of some of the leading literary men was now aroused,—Landor, Leigh Hunt, Barry Cornwall, Milnes, and Carlyle,—and with these Browning began to associate. An acquaintance with Macready, the actor, led him to attempt stage plays. *Strafford* was presented in 1837 by Macready, with a run of five nights, and in 1843 *A Blot in the 'Scutcheon* achieved a limited success.

Meanwhile the astonishing *Sordello* appeared, in 1840, the most crabbed and unintelligible of all his works. Here the eccentricities of style for which Browning is celebrated were fully developed, and in spite of the efforts of Browning experts to penetrate its obscurity, the poem stands as a warning of what poetry should not be. Mrs. Carlyle read it and declared that she could not tell whether Sordello was a man, a city, or a book. Naturally the poem was jeered at by the critics and ignored by the public.

Sordello, 1840

Sordello was followed the next year by *Bells and Pomegranates*, a collection of dramatic and lyric pieces, issued in a series of pamphlets. The title indicates, as the poet once explained, "an alternation, or mixture, of music with discoursing, sound with sense, poetry with thought." Under this quaint title much of his finest poetry appeared, but even such noble poems as *Pippa Passes*, *Saul*, and *The Flight of the Duchess* were looked at askance. Readers, mindful of *Paracelsus* and *Sordello*, were not inclined to break the teeth of their wits on new Browningisms. So the poet waited twenty years more for the coming of fame.

Bells and Pomegranates, 1841

In 1846 Browning was married to Elizabeth Barrett, who was already famous as a poet. The story of the invalid poet living in a dark room, of the courtship carried on by daily, almost hourly letters, and of the secret marriage and flight to

Italy, is one of the most beautiful love romances in the history of literature. In Florence they made their home, in the Casa Guidi, where fifteen years of unclouded happiness were given them, days "filled with books and music." Italy had been visited several times by Browning, and now the land of the "gaudy melon-flower" became his land of adoption. Italian literature, art, and scenery afforded the larger part of his poetic material. In *De Gustibus* he wrote:—

Romantic Marriage

> Open my heart and you will see
> Graved inside of it "Italy."

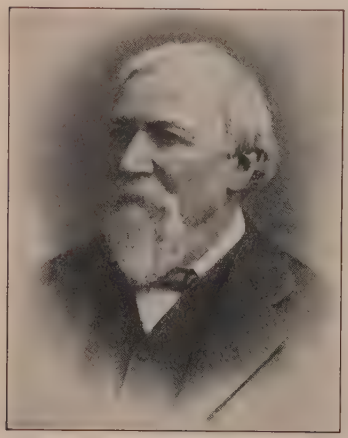
Mrs. Browning died in 1861 and Browning returned to London with his little son, henceforth dividing his allegiance between England and Italy. With the publication of *The Ring and the Book*, in 1868, his real reputation as a poet began, and for a time he almost overshadowed Tennyson in public attention. Honors poured in upon him. Degrees were conferred on him by Oxford, Cambridge, and Edinburgh. The Browning Society was established for the elucidation of his poetry—a questionable compliment—giving him a peculiar foretaste of immortality. He wrote steadily and voluminously to the end. One of his latest enthusiasms was the study of Greek literature, and the translation of tragedies of Euripides and Æschylus. Volumes of his later poetry are seldom opened except by the Browning adept. His last volume, *Asolando*, was published in 1889, on the day of his death, which occurred at his son's home in Venice. England claimed the honor of his burial, and he lies in Westminster Abbey by the side of Tennyson.

The Winning of Fame

Browning is described by one who knew him as "robust, active, loud in speech, cordial in manner, gracious and conciliatory in address, but subject to sudden fits of indignation which were like thunder-storms." In this robust and independent personality, singularly various and governed largely

by instincts, we find the explanation of Browning's work, which ranges through every aspect of poetic art from exquisite beauty to intolerable ugliness. His constant theme was human character. "The incidents in the development of a soul: little else is worth study," he said; and he was tireless in his probings for the soul's hidden secrets. His cyclopedic knowledge was all devoted to this end. He is our greatest psychologist in verse. He studied men, rather than man; hence his many portrait poems. His philosophy of life is extreme individualism, the right of every soul to unfold freely its heaven-born powers. Every man is "a god, though in the germ." Even in irredeemably bad characters, like Bishop Blougram and Sludge the Medium, he finds some spark of upward impulse toward God. His creed, expressed in his first poem, *Pauline*, "I believe in God and truth and love," remained the unaltered basis of his ethical teaching.

Character of Poet and Poetry



ROBERT BROWNING

Browning is a dramatic poet who never wrote a successful drama. His genius is too subjective, too analytical, for stage representation. His method is to study individual characters embodying specific moods or passions, and to present the results of analysis through the speech of the characters themselves, "so many utterances of so many imaginary persons, not mine," as he explained:—

Dramatic Monologue

> Live or dead or fashioned by my fancy,
> Enter each and all, and use their service,
> Speak from every mouth —the speech, a poem.

Nearly everything that he wrote is in this form of dramatic monologue. Of this form *My Last Duchess*, a whole tragedy in sixty lines, and *Andrea del Sarto* are perfect illustrations. The method is used also in the lyrical poems, which he calls "dramatic lyrics." Even his most beautiful and most passionate love-lyrics are cast in this dramatic mold, as *By the Fireside*, *The Last Ride Together*, and *In a Gondola*.

Of the dramas written with expectation of stage production, *A Blot in the 'Scutcheon* and *Colombe's Birthday* come nearest to the requirements of an acting play. More characteristic of his genius is *In a Balcony*, in which subtle emotions are unfolded in a series of monologues, for which the sparse dialogue seems a superfluous accompaniment.

Most original, characteristic, and altogether beautiful of the longer dramatic experiments is *Pippa Passes*, a kind of lyrical masque. Pippa, a blithesome little silk-winding girl, is singing in the streets of Asolo on the morning of her one holiday of the year, and thinking of the contrast of her lowly life with that of the great people whose houses she passes. Four groups of these great people are meditating crimes at the moment and are saved by the sudden shock of the sweet innocence of her song. This poem is unique in form and conception, and peculiarly fascinating.

Pippa Passes

Browning is the only poet who with adequate comprehension has celebrated in poetry the kindred arts of painting, sculpture, and music. He once aimed to be a painter, and then a musician, but fortunately was content to be the interpreter of these arts in their most ideal aspects. His Italian poems faithfully express the spirit of the Renaissance. His own poetic fire is united with that of the artist, whose emotions, exaltations, and despairs he vividly reproduces, as in *Fra Lippo Lippi*, *Andrea del Sarto*, and *Pictor*

The Art Poems

Ignotus. In *Abt Vogler* the impalpable and illusive soul of music is embodied as nowhere else in English poetry. In these poems, as everywhere, Browning preaches his doctrine of salvation through struggle, failure, and aspiration toward the ideal and the infinite. Andrea del Sarto's perfection is his misfortune. He has lost "the insight and stretch" of Raphael:—

> Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp,
> Or what's a heaven for? All is silver-gray,
> Placid and perfect with my art: the worse!

Among the long poems, *The Ring and the Book* is Browning's masterpiece, a poem of over twenty-one thousand lines, twice as long as *Paradise Lost.* The "book," picked up by the author in a Florentine bookshop, is an account of a Roman murder trial; the "ring" symbolizes the circle of evidence out of which the truth is extracted, as a goldsmith frees the pure gold circlet from encumbering alloy. The story of the murder is told twelve times in the poem, from as many different points of view, and with astonishing freshness in each repetition. As an example of strenuous intellectualism the poem is marvelous; as an interpretation of human life it is immensely powerful; as a work of art it is almost monstrous. There are passages of great beauty, lofty flights of poetic imagination, but there are also wide stretches of analysis and argument that have no relation to poetry.

The Ring and the Book

An insuperable obstacle to the general enjoyment of Browning's poetry is its harsh, crabbed, and obscure style, the terrors of which have not been mitigated by the efforts of innumerable Browning societies. The style is said to be a direct reflection of the volcanic vehemence of his personality, and of the swift, tumultuous energy of his thinking. This may be an explanation, but it is not a justification of his fantastic expressions, involved constructions,

The Browning Style

twisted rhymes, sentences cut down to a single explosive word or phrase, thoughts molded into riddles and enigmas. He seems to have found a natural delight in grotesque expression—in what Chesterton calls his "pure animal energy of words"—as he found delight in grotesque characters, like the Bishop of St. Praxed. The headlong rush and energy of his language is stimulating, but a constant wrestle with its difficulties is exhausting.

Tennyson said of Browning: "He has intellect enough for a dozen of us, but he has not got the glory of words." But he did have the glory of words at times, as in this passage from *Home Thoughts from Abroad*, which contains, in Stedman's opinion, "the finest lines ever written touching the song of a bird":—

> And after April, when May follows,
> And the whitethroat builds, and all the swallows!
> Hark, where my blossomed pear-tree in the hedge
> Leans to the field and scatters on the clover
> Blossoms and dewdrops—at the bent spray's edge—
> That's the wise thrush: he sings each song twice over,
> Lest you should think he never could recapture
> The first fine careless rapture!

It is difficult to explain how the author of such poetry could have written and printed such nonsense as the following:—

> He ended, you wager? Not half! A bet?
> Precedence to males in the alphabet!
> Still, disposed of Man's A B C, there's X
> Y Z want assistance,—the Fair Sex!

The most valuable legacy left to the world by Browning is the spirit of good cheer everywhere embodied in his poetry. The refrain of Pippa's song—

> God's in his heaven—
> All's right with the world!

is an epitome of his philosophy. In a period of doubt, melan-

choly, and distraction, he stood almost alone among the great authors with an unshaken faith in God and immortality, and with an invincible optimism, fundamental to his life and his philosophy. This is the beneficent lesson of his poems – the lesson of *Rabbi Ben Ezra*, his noble hymn of triumphant faith:—

Browning's Optimism

> Earth changes, but thy soul and God stand sure.

In the last poem he wrote is this faithful description of himself:—

> One who never turned his back, but marched breast forward,
> Never doubted clouds would break,
> Never dreamed, tho' right were worsted, wrong would triumph,
> Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
> Sleep to wake.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

1806–1861

Elizabeth Barrett spent her youth in Herefordshire among the Malvern Hills of *Piers Plowman* fame. It was a youth of burning enthusiasm for knowledge and of precocious acquirement. In *Aurora Leigh* she tells how she devoured the books in her father's library:—

> The first book first. And how I felt it beat
> Under my pillow, in the morning's dark,
> An hour before the sun would let me read!

Her linguistic knowledge embraced almost every language, ancient and modern, that possesses a literature worth reading. The study of Greek especially was a kind of ecstasy. Thus she describes her omnivorousness: "When I had read the Hebrew Bible from Genesis to Malachi, right through, and was never stopped by the Chaldee, and the Greek poets and Plato right through from end to end, I passed as thoroughly through the flood of all possible and impossible

Education

British and foreign novels and romances, with slices of metaphysics laid thick between the sorrows of the multitudinous Celestinas."

In her seventeenth year she published *An Essay on Mind*, written in Pope's style, in which she dealt familiarly with the philosophers from Plato to Bolingbroke. At twenty-four she printed a translation of the *Prometheus Unbound* of Æschylus.

Early Poems

Her next publication, *The Seraphim and Other Poems*, was too transcendental to be intelligible. But the collected *Poems* of 1844 placed her beside Tennyson in popular fame. The public was captivated by the unfamiliar music of her passionate lyrics and wild ballads. Even yet there are those who forgive the absurdities of *Lady Geraldine's Courtship* for the sake of its dash and glow of spirits. In 1850 she was mentioned for the laureateship, which went to Tennyson.

Her life of invalidism began with an accident in her fifteenth year, and was brought to an almost fatal crisis by the tragic death of her brother, of whom the poem *De Profundis* is a memorial. For many years she was confined to a couch in a darkened room, subjected to the unwise regimen of a doting and imperious father. Here in the gloom she studied and dreamed and wrote, and listened yearningly for the voices of the outside world. Then came the glorious young knight, Browning, as from her dreamland of old romance, and rescued her from parental tyranny and restored her to life, health, and joy:—

Invalidism and Marriage

> The face of all the world is changed, I think,
> Since first I heard the footsteps of thy soul
> Move still, oh, still, beside me, as they stole
> Betwixt me and the dreadful outer brink
> Of obvious death, where I, who thought to sink,
> Was caught up into love, and taught the whole
> Of life in a new rhythm.

Mrs. Browning could seldom hold her intense emotions and leaping imagination within the strict bounds of art. Her

poetry is an almost unaccountable mixture of great merits and great faults; diffuse, vague, even meaningless at times, freakish in language, careless in rhythm and rhyme, yet here and there glowing with the pure light of inspiration. She could commit such atrocities of rhyming as "Bacchantes—grant us" and "angels—candles," and yet declare to her friend Horne that poetry "has not been with me reveric, but art." Her strongest poems are those in which her passionate sympathy with suffering humanity is engaged. The poignant emotion of *The Cry of the Children*—a cry that came to her sick-room from the toiling factory children—gave a wholesome shock to the conscience of England. *Casa Guidi Windows*, though not great poetry, is a noble expression of sympathy with the Italians in their struggle for liberty.

Merits and Faults

Her most ambitious work was *Aurora Leigh*, a novel in blank verse, reflecting contemporary thought especially in respect to social problems. It is defective in art, abounding in audacities, yet containing passages of inspiring thought and beauty. In the *Sonnets from the Portuguese* we find a splendid exception to all that can be said in critical disparagement of Mrs. Browning's art. Here she achieved technical excellence, as it were, in spite of herself. Unquestionably she ranks with the three or four greatest English sonnet-writers. Indeed, no other such garland of "fourteen petaled blossoms," with so sweet a perfume of sincerity, was ever woven by English poet at love's bidding alone. The sonnets are a history of her romantic courtship, written without the knowledge of Browning, who was wont to call her playfully his "little Portuguese," and so the name was used as a veil for the almost childlike frankness of her heart's revelations. Upon this sonnet cycle, "one of the acknowledged glories of our literature," Mrs. Browning's fame rests secure.

Aurora Leigh; Sonnets from the Portuguese

The Pre-Raphaelite Movement

The feeling of revolt against conventionalism in art, and the desire to get back to the truth and simplicity of nature represented by Ruskin's teachings, found definite and somewhat sensational expression in the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, founded in 1848 by three painters, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Holman Hunt, and John Everett Millais. With them were soon associated Burne-Jones, William Morris, Algernon Charles Swinburne, and others of kindred tastes and principles. They were a little band of enthusiastic idealists, independent, original, and creative, earnestly seeking new sources of inspiration for painting and poetry. Ruskin gave the movement his support with the famous essay on *Pre-Raphaelitism*.

The aim of the Brotherhood, as defined by Rossetti, was "an entire, or rigid, adherence to the simplicity of nature, either in art or in poetry." This rule led to a realism in their painting of nature that insisted upon the minutest detail of truth, even the veining of a leaf. In the devout aspiration of the Italian painters preceding Raphael they found what they regarded as the true spirit of art. They were strongly impressed by the mystery and awe of early art as embodied in the great cathedrals, religious paintings, and Christian symbolism. They were romantics and mystics by temperament, and dealt mainly with religious and mediæval themes. Among modern poets Keats was the favorite representative of their ideals, and like Keats they were almost wholly detached from the political, scientific, and commercial interests of their own period.

Pre-Raphaelite Qualities

Pre-Raphaelitism represents a complexity of artistic, poetic, and spiritual elements, but the dominant element is romanticism. The revival of the mediæval spirit in art and poetry, the "renascence of wonder," as Watts-Dunton styles it, reached its culmination in this movement. The movement was allied to the Oxford movement

Romanticism

in that both went back to mediævalism for purer ideals of art and life. Although the initial force of each movement was soon spent, the benefits have been incalculable.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti

1828–1882

The leader and chief inspirer of the Pre-Raphaelites was the poet-painter Rossetti, born in London, the son of an Italian exile and interpreter of Dante's poetry. The name given him was a kind of dedication. He was taught to love his father's land and its great poet; his first publications were translations of the early Italian poets and of Dante's *Vita Nuova* (The New Life). A finer tribute to the great Florentine is his own poem, *Dante at Verona.* The love of Dante was a family inheritance. The brother, William Michael Rossetti, is one of the many English translators of the *Inferno.* A sister Maria made a helpful guide for readers in *The Shadow of Dante,* and the poems of Christina Rossetti, celebrated for their lofty aspiration, are suffused with the spirit of the great Italian poet.

A Family of Dante Scholars

Rossetti achieved equal eminence in two arts, painting and poetry, each of which lent its qualities to the other. His painting is filled with poetic thought, expressed not only through form and color, but also through an elaborate symbolism borrowed from mystical theology. His poetry is, in Milton's meaning of the terms, "sensuous and passionate," abounding in color and concrete imagery. Its most prominent characteristic is the mingling of realism and mysticism. In the enchanting poem, *The Blessed Damozel,* the spirit in heaven yearning for the lover on earth is described in the frank, childlike manner of the early painters, with all the warmth and color of living flesh:—

Realism of his Art

The blessed damozel leaned out
From the gold bar of heaven;
Her eyes were deeper than the depth
Of waters stilled at even;
She had three lilies in her hand,
And the stars in her hair were seven.

Rossetti was fond of making excursions into the world of supernaturalism, the weird border regions of human experience, of black magic, wraiths, and evil spirits. He accounted himself—

to be of those that haunt
The vale of magical dark mysteries,

and in these uncanny regions he conceived his most powerful ballads. *Rose Mary* is spun out of the superstition of the beryl-stone, and revives the witchery of Coleridge's *Christabel.* The ballad of *Sister Helen* one reads with a shudder, accepting for the moment the mediæval sorcery as a literal fact. The substance of the ballad is almost too terrible for art, yet Rossetti invests it with a compelling beauty.

The most praised, though not the best known, poetry of Rossetti is the sequence of love-sonnets, *The House of Life,* wrought with exquisite art after the model of Petrarch. In compactness of thought, concentration of emotion, and finished art, these sonnets rank next to the sonnets of Shakespeare. The obscurity commonly attributed to them is due not only to the subtlety of the thought, but to a certain remoteness in the art. They are more Italian than English; rarities of art, like unique pieces of porcelain, which only a few can possess.

Sonnets

This sense of the remote and strange is inevitable in respect to all of Rossetti's poetry, and limits the number of its appreciative readers. It is "stained glass poetry," through which the sunshine of common experience never streams. It is a little field set apart from the secular world, devoted to the sanctities of beauty and spiritual meditation, like a cathedral close. But "within this enclosed garden of

Limitations

poetry," writes Brooke, "the flowers, the paths, the waters, the buildings, are of an exquisiteness, a finish, a color and beauty which are rare, specialized, and of a seclusive charm."

William Morris

1834–1896

William Morris was even more completely detached from contemporary thought and feeling than was Rossetti. He was entirely mediæval in his instincts. In childhood he fed his imagination with Scott's novels, old ballads, and mediæval romances, English and French. He scorned the modern poets, except Keats, and to him as to Rossetti the *Morte d'Arthur* of Malory was a sort of Bible of poetic faith. He lived in the past. At Oxford his fellow students were astonished at his minute knowledge of the daily life, architecture, weapons, religion, manuscripts, dress, castles, and peasants' huts of the Middle Ages.

A Mediæval Mind

His first volume of verse, *The Defence of Guenevere*, published in 1858 and dedicated to Rossetti, was the herald of the new romantic school. There was wonder-working matter in this little volume of picturesque mediævalism; sad songs of Arthur's Knights and the Table Round, and wild ballads with weird refrains, like *The Wind*, with the haunting refrain of the unhappy wind that is blind,—

Winning the Public

> Yet still thou wanderest the lily-seed to find.

But the public ear was not yet attuned to this strange music, and the book found no favor except among the Pre-Raphaelite brethren. His next volume, *The Life and Death of Jason*, disclosing his singularly prolific talent for narrative verse, was successful, and with *The Earthly Paradise* in 1868 came his poetic triumph.

For those who can be lured away from the hurly-burly of the

hour, *The Earthly Paradise* affords a delightful enchantment. The stories are arranged in a cycle of the twelve months, two stories for each month, drawn equally from classic and Teutonic lore, and written in a smooth and flawless meter, sustained with marvelous skill through forty-two thousand lines. There is a restful charm in the dreamy, unimpassioned verse, as of long summer twilights and dewy perfumes. Morris's avowed "master" was "sweet-souled" Chaucer, whose narrative felicity he could reproduce, but whose rich-veined humanity, variety, and humor were not within his compass. Most charming are the songs of the months, which portray with a tinge of melancholy the changing aspects of the year. Even happy April foresees the "Autumn's sweet decay":—

The Earthly Paradise

> When summer brings the lily and the rose,
> She brings us fear; her very death she brings
> Hid in her anxious heart, the forge of woes;
> And, dull with fear, no more the mavis sings.

The general tone of this poetry is revealed in the Prologue, in which "the idle singer of an empty day" playfully describes himself:—

> Dreamer of dreams, born out of my due time,
> Why should I strive to set the crooked straight?
> Let it suffice me that my murmuring rhyme
> Beats with light wing against the ivory gate,
> Telling a tale not too importunate
> To those who in the sleepy region stay,
> Lulled by the singer of an empty day.

But far from being an "idle singer," Morris was a practical craftsman of great skill and versatility, with a wonderful capacity for work—a poet who could write five hundred lines of verse in a morning. He began his career as an architect, inspired by Ruskin's *Stones of Venice*. He then tried painting, became a designer and manufacturer of artistic household furnishings, thereby revolutionizing taste in home dec-

Large and Varied Productivity

oration, and established the Kelmscott Press for making beautiful books. He translated the *Æneid*, the *Odyssey*, and *Beowulf*. A journey to Iceland led to an absorbing enthusiasm for Scandinavian literature, resulting in a fine epic, *Sigurd the Volsung*, and translations of the Icelandic *Sagas*. He became an ardent Socialist, and for his social ideals went back to the Middle Ages, when laborers were not degraded into machines by processes of commercial efficiency, when art was a thing of the people and every artisan was an artist of the beautiful, loving the thing he made with his hands.

WILLIAM MORRIS

Morris's dominant quality was idealism. He idealized the past and he idealized humanity. He lived in a world of imagined beauty, and his life, at war with the corrupt world, was a lonely life, revealing a strain of melancholy strangely in contrast with his abounding vitality. Abandoning verse, he shaped his visions of perfection for mankind in several prose romances, written in quaint, old-fashioned Saxon speech. *The Dream of John Ball* pictures the fourteenth century as Morris believed it to have been, and *News from Nowhere* pictures the world as it might be if men would vie with nature in making all things beautiful—Utopia brought up to date. He wandered dreamily through strange regions in *The House of the Wolfings*, *The Roots of the Mountains*, *The Wood Beyond the World*, and other rovings of imagina-

His Idealism

tion unlike anything else in prose fiction, always in indefatigable pursuit of perfection. By a happy fate, the last work of his hands was the printing of a magnificent edition of his beloved Chaucer.

Algernon Charles Swinburne

1837–1909

The most comprehensively endowed poet of the Pre-Raphaelite group was Algernon Charles Swinburne, whose mastery of verse-craft was phenomenal. He was the son of an admiral of the Queen's navy, and his youth was spent alternately on the Northumbrian shore and in the Isle of Wight. Thus by inheritance and by experience his soul was filled with the poetry of the sea, in the expression of which he is unsurpassed among English poets. At Oxford he was distinguished for his linguistic acquirements. Foreign languages, ancient and modern, became almost as native speech to him, and he wrote graceful poems in Greek, Latin, and Old French. His knowledge of literature was fully as extensive, and his critical writing in prose, especially in the field of Elizabethan drama, would distinguish him as an author had he written no verse.

Preparation for Poetry

Drama first engaged his poetic energies. His first volume, *The Queen Mother and Rosamond*, published in 1861, contained ineffectual plays of the Elizabethan type. The later plays of the *Mary Stuart* trilogy were more successful reproductions of the Elizabethan manner. But fame first came to Swinburne with *Atalanta in Calydon*, in 1864, a magnificent reproduction of the form and spirit of Greek drama. In this work his supreme power as a melodist was revealed. The outburst of lyric splendor in the choruses astonished even those accustomed to the delicious music of Tennyson:—

Dramas

When the hounds of spring are on winter's traces,
The mother of months in meadow or plain
Fills the shadows and windy places
With lisp of leaves and ripple of rain.

Here was a new singing voice, prophetic of new glories for English poetry, which was soon poured forth again in the melodies of *Poems and Ballads*, published in 1866.

The most prominent fact about Swinburne's poetry is this miraculous gift of music. He made a new instrument of the English language. "Words in his hands are like the ivory balls of a juggler, and all words seem to be in his hands." It is a poetic gift that requires a poet like Woodberry to describe: "The lyrical iridescence of verse like a mother-of-pearl sea, like a green wave breaking in tempest, like a rainbow spray before the beak of his driving song; it is a marvel that changes, but fails not, a witchery of language, a vocal incantation in the rhymes, an enchantment in the mere pour of sound."

A Genius of Melody

Under this enchantment readers fail to realize the range and variety of Swinburne's powers. His dramas, written not for the stage, are the best poetic dramas of the age. His poetry of the sea is not surpassed even by Byron. In the narrative poems, *Tristram of Lyonesse* and *The Tale of Balen*, he rivals Tennyson and Arnold, treating the Arthurian legend with greater fidelity. His memorial tributes to poets and heroes are loyal, tender, and eloquent, like the poem *In Memory of Walter Savage Landor*. The elegy, *Ave atque Vale*, in nobility of composition vies with Shelley's *Adonais*. He wrote beautiful songs of childhood, odes of large thought and sweeping harmonies, ballads and rondels that reproduce the grace of old French minstrelsy. And no English poet is more intense in his patriotic strains:—

His Varied Excellence

England, none that is born thy son, and lives, by grace of thy glory, free,
Lives and yearns not at heart and burns with hope to serve as he worships thee.

The chief quality of Swinburne's nature was enthusiasm, and from this quality came his chief defect, which was excessiveness. His loves and his hates were always intemperate. He indulged in the extravagant praise of friends and execration of enemies as a kind of linguistic luxury. His prose criticism is injured by this excess, critical discrimination disappearing in floods of adulation or vituperation. His strongest passion was love of liberty, a revolutionary fervor inherited from Shelley. A defiant hostility to established institutions, political, social, and religious, probably cost him the laureateship.

The Defects of Excess

His poetic style is unique in its excesses—thought that is vague, diffusive, and fluctuating like the impressions of music; melody that cloys with its perpetual sweetness; anapestic meter that tires the reader by its galloping rush without aim and without end; artful alliteration painfully prolonged; tricks of facile rhyming that produce only a tedious jingle where the imagination is trying to produce a picture:—

Excesses of Style

Hills and valleys where April rallies his radiant squadron of flowers and birds,
Steep strange beaches and lustrous reaches of fluctuant sea that the land engirds.

Captivated by his own cleverness, he overlooks the real purpose of his song. His art runs into artifice. His work is marveled at, but not widely read, nor loved, nor quoted. It does not touch life seriously, because it does not flow freely from the heart, the one final source of power in poetry.

PROGRAM OF WORK

CLASS READING. Arnold: *Dover Beach; To a Friend; Shakespeare; The Forsaken Merman; A Summer Night; Lines Written in Kensington Garden; The Better Part; Thyrsis; Sohrab and Rustum.* Clough: *Qua Cursum Ventus; Say not the Struggle Nought Availeth;*

Where Lies the Land? Perche Pensa? Pensando S'Invecchia Hope Evermore and Believe; Easter Day.

TENNYSON: *Mariana; The Lady of Shalott; The Two Voices; The Palace of Art; A Dream of Fair Women; The Gardener's Daughter; Ulysses Locksley Hall; Charge of the Light Brigade; Break, Break, Break* Songs from *The Princess; Crossing the Bar; In Memoriam:* Proem i, vi, ix, xix, xxi, xxvii, liv, lxxvii, xcvi, cvi, Epilogue. *Idylls of the King:* Lancelot and Elaine, The Passing of Arthur.

BROWNING: *The Year's at the Spring; How they Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix; The Lost Leader; Memorabilia; Rabbi Ben Ezra; Incident of the French Camp; Home Thoughts from Abroad; Evelyn Hope; The Last Ride Together; My Star; One Word More; My Last Duchess; Andrea del Sarto; Abt Vogler; Wanting is—What?* Epilogue to *Asolando; Pippa Passes.*

MRS. BROWNING: *The Sleep; A Musical Instrument; The Cry of the Children; Cowper's Grave; Sonnets from the Portuguese:* i, vii, xiv, xx, xxi, xxvi, xxvii, xxviii, xxxv, xliii.

ROSSETTI: *My Sister's Sleep; The Blessed Damozel; Sister Helen; The Cloud Confines; The Sea Limits; The House of Life:* v—Heart's Hope. xi—The Love-Letter, xiii—Youth's Antiphony, xix—Silent Noon, xxvi—Mid-Rapture, xlvii—Broken Music, lx—Transfigured Life, lxxvii—Soul's Beauty, lxxxii—Hoarded Joy, lxxxvi—Lost Days.

MORRIS: *The Eve of Crecy; Two Red Roses Across the Moon; The Wind; The Earthly Paradise:* Prologue, *Atalanta's Race, The Lady of the Land, June, August.*

SWINBURNE: *A Forsaken Garden;* Choruses from *Atalanta in Calydon; A Match; In Memory of Walter Savage Landor; Cor Cordium; On a Country Road; Étude Réaliste; A Child's Laughter; The Roundel; The Garden of Proserpine; The Cliffside Path.*

BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM. Stedman's *Victorian Poets* (Arnold, Tennyson, Browning, Rossetti, Morris, Swinburne); Brooke's *Four Victorian Poets* (Arnold, Clough, Rossetti, Morris); Payne's *Greater English Poets of the Nineteenth Century;* Dawson's *Makers of English Poetry;* Shairp's *Portraits of Friends* (Clough); Hutton's *Literary Essays* (Clough, Arnold, Tennyson); Sidgwick's *Essays and Addresses* (Arnold, Clough); White's *Arnold and the Spirit of the Age;* Swinburne's *Essays and Studies* (Arnold, Rossetti, Morris).

Hallam Tennyson's *Memoir of Tennyson;* Benson's *Tennyson;* Lounsbury's *Life and Times of Tennyson;* Lyall's *Tennyson* (E. M. L.); Brooke's *Tennyson: His Art and Relations to Modern Life;* Lockyer's *Tennyson as Student and Poet of Nature;* Gates's *Studies and Appreciations;* Dowden's *Studies in Literature* (Tennyson, Browning); Jones's *Growth of the Idylls of the King.*

Sharp's *Browning* (G. W.); Orr's *Life and Letters of Browning;*

Chesterton's *Browning* (E. M. L.); Gosse's *Browning: Personalia;* Orr's *Handbook to the Works of Browning;* Harrington's *Browning Studies;* Birrell's *Obiter Dicta*, First Series; Brooke's *The Poetry of Browning;* More's *Shelburne Essays*, Third Series (Browning, Swinburne); Morley's *Studies in Literature* (*Ring and Book*); Church's *Dante and Other Essays* (*Sordello*); Pater's *Essays from the Guardian;* Kenyon's *Letters of Elizabeth Barrett Browning;* Ingraham's *Mrs. Browning;* Mitford's *Recollections of a Literary Life;* James's *W. W. Story and his Friends;* Gosse's *Critical Kit-Kats;* Whiting's *Study of Elizabeth Barrett Browning.*

Benson's *Rossetti* (E. M. L.); Knight's *Rossetti* (G. W.); Sharp's *Rossetti;* Rossetti's *Letters to William Allingham;* W. M. Rossetti's *Ruskin, Rossetti and Pre-Raphaelitism;* Pater's *Appreciations;* Mabie's *Essays in Literary Interpretation;* Mackail's *Life of Morris;* Noyes's *Morris* (E. M. L.); Vallance's *Morris: His Art, Writings, and Public Life;* More's *Shelburne Essays*, Sixth Series; Saintsbury's *Corrected Impressions;* Brock's *Morris: His Work and Influence;* Wratislaw's *Swinburne: A Study;* Mackail's *Swinburne;* Woodberry's *Swinburne;* Walker's *Literature of the Victorian Era;* Watts-Dunton's *Old Familiar Faces;* Symons's *Figures of Several Centuries.*

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION AND RESEARCH

1. Difference between the spirit of Arnold's prose works and the spirit of his poetry. 2. Illustrations of the thought of the age in Arnold's poetry. 3. The interest in Clough as a man and as a poet.

4. Outline of Tennyson's life. 5. The growth of Tennyson as a poet from 1832 to 1842. 6. Study and discuss the English idyls, *The Gardener's Daughter, Dora*, etc. 7. A careful comparison of *Locksley Hall* with *Locksley Hall Sixty Years After.* 8. Did Tennyson create any impressive personages? 9. Evidences of Tennyson's devotion to England.

10. Effect of Browning's early education on his poetry. 11. Moral lessons of *Rabbi Ben Ezra.* 12. Show by selected poems the extent to which Browning used the dramatic element. 13. A study of Browning's humor. 14. Compare Browning's *Prospice* with Tennyson's *Crossing the Bar.* 15. Make a full interpretation of *My Last Duchess.* 16. Give the point and substance of *Fra Lippo Lippi.*

17. Make a study of Rossetti's paintings (reproductions) in connection with his poetry. 18. Special beauties of *The Blessed Damozel.* 19. Make a study of Morris's first volume of poems with reference to romanticism. 20. Summarize the qualities of Swinburne's poetry.

CHAPTER XXI

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

The twentieth century has thus far brought forth no successors to the great authors of the last half of the nineteenth century. Swinburne, who died in 1909, was the last of the great Victorian poets. There are still many poets, but no great ones. There never were so many novelists, but none approaches the heights of Dickens and Thackeray. There are writers of large merit, even of great distinction, in every department of literature—poets, novelists, essayists, dramatists—but no one has exhibited the high singularity of inspired genius. The journalistic habit of mind that demands an unceasing stream of fresh facts and fresh sensations is undoubtedly hostile to the interests of true literature. There is less concentration and devotion of genius. Poets do not, like Wordsworth and Tennyson, solemnly "dedicate" themselves to poetry. With remarkable versatility an author writes poems, essays, novels, or dramas, yielding to the temptation to dissipate his talents in work of mediocre merit in order to catch the popular ear and obtain quick returns of fame and profit.

Literary Conditions of To-day

With this tendency to drift with the current of popular desire for diversified entertainment, literature loses its serious purposes and its artistic principles. There is, for example, no longer any quarrel between romanticism and realism; an author uses both methods without prejudice or conviction. If there is any specially marked tendency in current literature, it is the

effort to awaken by means of poetry and fiction a deeper interest in the life of the lowest classes of society. This is an enlargement of the humanitarian element in the literature of the last century, a reassertion in varied form of the idealism and baffled hopes of Morris and Ruskin.

Among the poets, William Watson has preserved the spirit of Wordsworth and Arnold, in poems of fine artistic form and lofty sentiment. He is meditative and earnest in his thought, and is at his best in memorial poems like *Wordsworth's Grave*. "Full oft," he says, he has made other poets the subject of his verse:—

> In singers' selves found me a theme of song,
> Holding these also to be very part
> Of Nature's greatness, and accounting not
> Their descants least heroical of deeds.

William Watson, 1858–
Robert Bridges, 1844–
Stephen Phillips, 1864–1915

Robert Bridges was made laureate in 1913, to succeed Alfred Austin. He is a classicist in his poetic tastes, and cultivates in his poetry a classic simplicity and precision that amount almost to severity. There is a lack of warmth and color in his verse; his emotions never become ecstasies. He loves nature, but with a reserved, unimpassioned love. And yet his art, though a conscious restraint upon his pen, is often very beautiful. High hopes were raised by Stephen Phillips in his poetic dramas, *Herod*, *Ulysses*, *Nero*, and especially *Paolo and Francesca*. The last is a beautiful dramatic poem, in which the tragic story, first made famous by Dante, is elaborated in graceful verse and strong dramatic action. Phillips attempted to bring the drama back to its original union with poetry, as in the Elizabethan age. But his plays are too poetical for the present conditions of the stage. In his richly colored diction, he often recalls the exultant young Marlowe.

Phillips used remote themes, strong in poetic and historic association, and worked them out with a careful art. Very

unlike him in these respects is John Masefield, a poet who has won a wide popularity with his facile rhymes. He writes of prosaic, every-day life, and with careless art. Much of his youth was spent on the sea, and he describes the rough life of sailors, as in *Dauber*, in vivid pictures. His most characteristic work is in such poems as *The Daffodil Fields* and *The Everlasting Mercy*, in which he paints, in the spirit of Hardy's pessimism, the passion and the tragedy of life that is lived near the soil. He is a narrative poet and his stories run on so glibly as frequently to lose their connection with poetic art. But in the volume, *Good Friday and Other Poems*, sensational realism gives place to impressions of true poetic beauty, especially in a series of sonnets, subtle in thought and refined in expression. In truth, Masefield's best poetry is in a few breezy lyrics, inspired by love of the open fields and dashing ocean spray. The yearning in *Sea Fever* links his spirit with that of the Anglo-Saxon poet of *The Seafarer*:—

John Masefield, 1875 -
Wilfred W. Gibson, 1878–

> I must go down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky,
> And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by.

Another poet of the people is Wilfred Wilson Gibson, who sings the "life-song of humanity" in *Daily Bread*, *Fires*, and *Womenkind*. He writes in the dramatic form with a bald and vivid realism, and pictures with deep human sympathy the dull, monotonous life of the day laborer, a world of poverty and pain in which he finds—

> All life moving to one measure—
> Daily bread, daily bread.

In strong contrast with the depressing realism of these poets is the romanticism of Alfred Noyes, the most prolific poet of the day. In 1903 he published *The Flower of Old Japan*, a fairy-tale for children with a symbolic meaning for older folk. In *The Forests of Wild Thyme* he again employed the "fairy

gleam" of the child's imagination to symbolize the mystery of life. In 1908 appeared the long epic poem, *Drake*, which revives the adventurous life of the great Elizabethan sea-rovers. The poem is too long and too gorgeous and excessive in its descriptions, but its spirit is the flaming spirit of the young Elizabethans, with whom Noyes proves his kinship. In the *Tales of the Mermaid Tavern*, his most original production, he brings to life in vivid dramatic scenes Marlowe, Shakespeare, Jonson, Raleigh, and the others who engaged in the grand frolics of wit and wine at the Mermaid Inn.

Alfred Noyes, 1880–

A great part of Noyes's poetry is only balladry. He writes with a fluent, diffuse, and unrestrained expression. His repetitions are tedious; one wishes his favorite character, the Spanish galleon, would burn or sink. His work needs the pruning-knife of a rigid self-criticism. As Emerson said of Thoreau: "His thyme and marjoram are not yet converted into honey."

To three older poets, Austin Dobson, Edmund Gosse, and Andrew Lang, we are indebted for charming poetry of the *vers de société* type. If there is not exaltation for the spirit, there is delightful recreation for the mind in this graceful verse. Especially charming are their revivals of the old Troubadour lyric forms,—ballade, rondeau, triolet, and villanelle. Such poems are trifles light as air, but like floating bubbles they catch their bright colors from the sunshine of life. Gosse's *On Viol and Flute*, Dobson's *Proverbs in Porcelain*, and Lang's *Rhymes à la Mode* are representative collections of this poetry. Gosse's *Firdusi in Exile* is a long poem from the same Persian source as Arnold's *Sohrab and Rustum*. Both Dobson and Gosse have written much excellent literary criticism and biography.

Austin Dobson, 1840–
Edmond Gosse, 1849–
Andrew Lang, 1844–1912

English literature suffered a grievous loss in the death of Rupert Brooke, a young poet of extraordinary promise, who

gave his life for England in the great continental war. A little volume of poems and a volume of travel sketches are the only memorials of his genius, but his fame is secure. "A new star shines in the English heavens," says Woodberry. His poetry is filled with the zest of inspired youth, abounding in surprises of thought and beauties of phrase. The sonnets of "1914," written while in training for the battle-front, are unsurpassed in their exalted patriotism. His lines upon *The Dead*, who "poured out the sweet wine of youth," profoundly stir the English heart:—

Rupert Brooke, 1887–1915

> Blow, bugles, blow! They brought us, for our dearth,
> Holiness, lacked so long, and Love, and Pain.
> Honor has come back, as a king, to earth,
> And paid his subjects with a royal wage;
> And Nobleness walks in our ways again;
> And we have come into our heritage.

The most important event in recent literary history is the so-called Irish movement, or Celtic Renaissance. A little band of enthusiastic Irish poets, inspired by the common hope of the Irish people for the restoration of their national unity, has attempted to revive for purposes of creative literature the rich stores of Irish myth, folk-tale, and legend. The literary revival is part of a larger movement to restore the ancient language and customs, as they still linger in remote western Ireland. The hopeful, gladsome spirit of the movement is inspiring. These young Irish poets work in a kind of ecstasy of hope and aspiration. One of them, George W. Russell, says in explanation of their faith: "The seeds that are sown at the beginning of a race bear their flower and fruits toward its close; and those antique names, Angus, Lir, Deirdre, Finn, Ossian, and the rest, will be found to be each one the symbol of enduring qualities, and their story a trumpet through which will be blown the music

Celtic Renaissance

of an eternal joy." The undertaking is to this poet the opening of the "mountain gates of dreamland":—

And the land of youth lies gleaming, flushed with opal light and mirth,
And the old enchantment lingers in the honey heart of earth.

The leader of the movement, on its literary side, is William Butler Yeats, born in Dublin in 1865. A portion of his youth was spent in the western county of Sligo, where his mind was captivated by the legends and folk-lore preserved by the people. He translated the stories and exploited his discoveries with fervor in both verse and prose. *The Wanderings of Oisin*, *The Death of Cuchulain*, and *Fergus the Druid*, are poems from this source. Yeats is romantic, idealistic, and often annoyingly mystical, expressing through vague symbols the eternal conflict between beauty and evil in the world. His poetry is dream poetry, full of moonlight beauty and mystery. He not only loves to—

William Butler Yeats, 1865–

Sing of old Eire and the ancient ways,

but he loves even more to sing of *The Land of Heart's Desire*, the land of fairies and dreams, of love and peace and eternal youth—

Where beauty has no ebb, decay no flood,
A land where even the old are fair,
And even the wise are merry of tongue,
But joy is wisdom, Time an endless song.

Of a similar character are the poems and prose tales of William Sharp, better known as Fiona Macleod, the Scotch representative of the Celtic revival. His delicate and beautiful prose, descriptive of nature and primitive highland character, is quite as poetical as his verse. Indeed he is more delightful as a prose poet in his novel, *Mountain Lovers*, and in the short stories of quaint Gaelic life than in the poems, *From the Hills of Dream*, and

William Sharp, 1856–1905

others, filled with the mystery and primeval melancholy of the Celtic nature.

The most important feature of the Irish movement is its dramatic product. An "Irish National Theater" has been established in Dublin. A troupe of native Irish players has won fame for its faithful and excellent presentation of native plays, written by Yeats, Lady Gregory, Edward Martyn, and many others. Among the contributors to this dramatic work is one author of supreme Celtic genius, John Millington Synge, who died in the very beginning of a career of splendid promise. Educated at Trinity College, Dublin, he became for some time a wanderer on the Continent and a student of French literature in Paris. Persuaded by his friend Yeats, he finally went to the Aran Islands, lived with the people, and learned their language, customs, and character. The fruit of this experience is contained in five short plays, which have brought to the stage new standards and new ideals of simplicity, sincerity, and truth. The most famous is *The Playboy of the Western World*, a comedy of character astonishing in its originality of conception. More remarkable is *Riders to the Sea*, a little one-act play, universal in its appeal, though entirely local in its color, embodying the idea of fate, as deep and tragic as in any Greek play. In these plays the action is swift, the expression condensed and poetic, and every detail is packed with significance. Synge is not an "Irish Shakespeare," as admirers like to call him, but his genius is unquestionable.

John M. Synge, 1871–1909

Widely extended among English authors, there is a hopeful effort to revive English drama. Plays are appearing that belong to literature as well as to the stage. The theater has become a forum for the discussion of vital questions. Scrupulous dramatists are aiming to combine art and education with entertainment. John Galsworthy, for example, presents powerfully in *Strife* the conflict between capital and labor, and in *Justice* the

John Galsworthy, 1867–

abuses of the English prison system. Galsworthy is better known, however, as a writer of fiction, dealing with the upper middle classes of English society. The trend of his talent is to analyze and satirize the stolid conservatism, the inflexible rules of conduct and thought of the typical English gentleman, as in *The Man of Property*, *The Country House*, and *The Freelands*.

James M. Barrie, 1860–

In 1897 James M. Barrie turned his charming novel, *The Little Minister*, into an equally successful play, and has since been mainly identified with the stage. His exquisite fantasy, *Peter Pan*, is a sweet and wholesome entertainment for young and old, and such plays as *What Every Woman Knows* and *Quality Street* are graceful revelations of character. But Barrie is at his best when describing his "brither Scots." The quaint humor, natural pathos, and character portrayal in *Auld Licht Idylls* and *A Window in Thrums* are his finest literary qualities.

George Bernard Shaw, 1856–

No dramatic writer is more prominent in the public eye than George Bernard Shaw, who has experimented with life and art at almost every angle of approach. He has been journalist, critic, novelist, dramatist, reformer, woman-suffragist, socialist, and always a clever sensationalist. His volumes of *Plays, Pleasant and Unpleasant* are properly named. Some of them are witty and sparkling, triumphantly delightful on the stage; others are vulgar in their disregard of the common decencies of art. Shaw is a satirist who aims the shafts of his satiric wit at good and evil with reckless impartiality. He ridicules love and the emotions, assails whatever is commonly regarded with reverence, and in general turns topsy-turvy the ordinary relations and conceptions of life. In his philosophy, whatever is is wrong. Paradox is his chief aim. His brilliancy can never be disputed, and his sincerity can never be trusted.

From the multitude of prosperous novelists it is impossible to select those who may become permanently famous. While

many have a wide popularity, no one has a dominant fame, and few, if any, are writing enduring masterpieces of fiction. Eden Phillpotts follows in the footsteps of Hardy in describing with stern realism the life of Devonshire. Dartmoor is his special literary province as Wessex is Hardy's. In *Children of the Mist*, *Demeter's Daughter*, and *Widecomb Fair* the life of the weather-beaten farmers as it is lived near to the "good red earth"—their grimy labor, their primitive passions, their picturesque dialect —is reproduced with a faithfulness of flavor that is at times disagreeably earthy.

Eden Phillpotts, 1862–

The special literary province of Arnold Bennett is Staffordshire, where he was born in 1867. The narrow and homely aspects of life in this pottery district he pictures with the intimate and literal truth of personal experience in his stories of the "Five Towns." Bennett writes two kinds of fiction: the one, clever "commercial" fiction that caters to the popular appetite for sensational entertainment, such as *Buried Alive* and *Dendry the Audacious*—"fantasias," he calls them, in which his imagination riots in romantic extravagance; the other, fiction that deals seriously with life's realities, conceived and executed in the spirit of the most rigorous realistic art. Of this type are his masterpiece, *The Old Wives' Tale*, and the trilogy of *Clayhanger*, *Hilda Lessways*, and *These Twain*. The atmosphere of these novels is heavy and depressing, like the smoky atmosphere of his Five Towns. The realism is often tedious in its trivial record of facts, but it is convincingly true.

Arnold Bennett, 1867-

William De Morgan was sixty-seven years old when his first and best novel, *Joseph Vance*, appeared in 1906. *Alice-for-short*, *It Never Can Happen Again*, and others that have followed give evidence of a studious and fruitful adherence to Dickens and Thackeray as models. In his pictures of London life, especially of the child waifs of poverty, and in his confused plots and multitude of characters he recalls Dickens, his

laughter, pathos, and tears. He also recalls Trollope in his method of building up a character out of a multitude of facts, minutely observed and recorded. Mrs. Humphry Ward has achieved distinction with her studies of religious, political, and social problems. Her fame began with *Robert Elsmere* and *David Greve*, in which she grappled with the largest spiritual questions of the time. *Marcella*, *Sir George Tressady*, *Eleanor*, *Diana Mallory*, and *The Coryston Family*, are large and luminous portrayals of character. The splendid figure of Marcella presents the "new woman" as she may be when her life has had its full logical evolution. Mrs. Ward's novels are strongly—coldly—intellectual; they suggest the investigations of an expert in sociology. They are never lacking in a certain austere excellence, which tends toward monotony, but they are lacking in humor, a defect which places them far below the novels of George Eliot, with which they are most often compared.

William De Morgan, 1839–
Mrs. Humphry Ward, 1851–

A writer of sea stories, Joseph Conrad, has won a worthy fame with his vigorous descriptions of the beauty and the terror of the ocean. *Tales of Unrest*, *Typhoon*, and *Lord Jim* are records of strange adventures that fascinate if they do not convince the reader. Conrad was born a Russian, and learned the English language after he was twenty years old. For twenty years he was a sailor, becoming finally master of his ship. His genius is amphibious, at home on sea and land. But his stories of social unrest and Russian nihilism, like *Under Western Eyes*, are not strikingly original. He deals best with the titanic forces of nature, contrasted with the pigmy forces of man, as seen in the storm-paths of the ocean. Here he is original, powerful, and without a rival. William J. Locke secured a place in the affections of countless readers with his *Beloved Vagabond*, published in 1906. In this and other stories he pictures with peculiar warmth and delicacy of feel-

Joseph Conrad, 1857–
William J. Locke, 1863–

ing eccentric characters of the Bohemian type, developing and illustrating their odd quirks of character with gentle humor, genial irony, and affectionate tolerance.

It was the fortune of Herbert G. Wells to be an assistant in the laboratory of the great scientist Huxley. This experience led to the creation of almost a new type of English fiction, the scientific romance, as seen in *The Time Machine* and *In the Days of the Comet*. Wells is a student of sociology and ardently interested in the problems of the laboring masses. In *The First Men in the Moon*, with a suggestion of Swift's grim irony, he satirizes society as it is to-day, and in *New Worlds for Old* and *A Modern Utopia* he pictures society as it will be when regulated by science and socialism. The purpose of his books is to promote more generous ideals of life, to commend a society in which the spirit of good-will prevails, instead of the spirit of competitive and selfish profit. Even the most fantastic creations of his imagination, infinitely ingenious and absurd, are stimulating and thought-provoking in the direction of better living.

Herbert G. Wells, 1866-

Maurice Hewlett is a writer of romantic fiction and master of a rich poetic prose style, shaped by the combined influence of classic, Italian, and French literature. The *Little Novels of Italy* are so true in their atmosphere as to be almost direct transcripts from life, and are as finished in their art as sketches by Pater. His preference is for historic characters, which he treats with a free imagination and poetic coloring, as in *Richard Yea-and-Nay* and *The Queen's Quair*. Hewlett is also a delightful guide among the art treasures of Italy. In *Earthwork Out of Tuscany* he charmingly succeeds in his purpose to "convey the hawthorn scent of Della Robbia," and "the mellow autumn tones of the life of Florence."

Maurice Hewlett, 1861–

Any serious survey of the present conditions of literature must result in an impression of large and varied products in

every department, possessing many distinguishing excellences. But one looks in vain for the supreme excellence that sheds its light like a flaming beacon over the whole field. English literature to-day is amazingly rich in talent, but poor in genius. Busy authors innumerable are working with splendid enthusiasm, and with ample knowledge of their art, lacking nothing but inspiration. Like Arnold's Scholar Gypsy, all are eagerly, expectantly "waiting for the spark from heaven to fall."

PROGRAM OF WORK

THE POETS. WATSON: *Wordsworth's Grave; Lachrymæ Musarum; Autumn; In Laleham Churchyard; Ode on May.* BRIDGES: *Larks; A Robin; Nightingales; Spirits; Winter Nightfall; Poor Withered Rose.* GIBSON: *The Machine* (in *Fires*); *The Furnace* and *The Night-Shift* (in *Daily Bread*). MASEFIELD: *Ships; The West Wind; Sea Fever; The Seekers; Tewksbury Road; Laugh and be Merry; The Word.* NOYES: *Forty Singing Seamen; The Barrel Organ; Drake*, bk. II; *A Coiner of Angels* and *Raleigh* (in *Tales of the Mermaid Tavern*). BROOKE: *Blue Evening; The Hill;* Sonnets of *1914: Peace, Safety, The Dead* I, II, *The Soldier.* RUSSELL: *The Gates of Dreamland; Beauty; The Voice of the Waters.* DOBSON: *A Garden Idyl; Good-Night, Babette; Tu Quoque; Avice; Arceus Exit* (Triolet); *When I Saw You Last, Rose* (Villanelle); *In After Days* (Rondeau). GOSSE: *Lying in the Grass; Wind of Provence; Greece and England; With a Copy of Herrick; Theocritus; Revelation.* LANG: *Ballade of Blue China; Ballade of the Book-hunter; Ballade of Literary Fame; Ronsard's Grave; Villanelle.*

Most of these poems will be found in Quiller-Couch's *Oxford Book of Victorian Verse*, or Stedman's *Victorian Anthology.*

THE DRAMATISTS. SYNGE: *Riders to the Sea; The Playboy of the Western World.* YEATS: *The Land of Heart's Desire; Cathleen ni Hoolihan;* Poems: *The Lake Isle of Innesfree; The White Birds; The Hosting of the Sidhe.* LADY GREGORY: *Spreading the News; The Workhouse Ward; The Gaol Gate.* PHILLIPS: *Paola and Francesca.* SHAW: *Arms and the Man; You Never Can Tell.* GALSWORTHY: *Strife; Joy.* BARRIE: *What Every Woman Knows.*

THE NOVELISTS. CONRAD: *Typhoon; Lord Jim.* BENNETT: *The Old Wives' Tale.* PHILLPOTTS: *Children of the Mist.* WELLS: *The Time Machine; New Worlds for Old; Kipps.* GALSWORTHY:

The Man of Property; The Freelands. DE MORGAN: *Joseph Vance; It Never Can Happen Again.* LOCKE: *The Beloved Vagabond; Septimus.* MRS. WARD: *Eleanor; Marcella.* BARRIE: *The Little Minister; A Window in Thrums.* HEWLETT: *Life and Death of Richard Yea-and-Nay.* FIONA MACLEOD: *Pharais; The Mountain Lovers.*

BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM. Archer's *Poets of the Younger Generation;* Kennedy's *English Literature;* Cooper's *Some English Story Tellers;* Phelps's *Essays on Modern Novelists;* Hale's *Dramatists of Today;* Howe's *Dramatic Portraits;* Huneker's *Iconoclasts* (Shaw); Chesterton's *George Bernard Shaw;* Weygandt's *Irish Plays and Playwrights;* Lady Gregory's *Our Irish Theater;* Bourgeois's *Synge and the Irish Theater;* Yeats's *Celtic Twilight;* Bickley's *Synge and the Irish Dramatic Movement;* Howe's *John M. Synge: A Critical Study;* Elton's *Modern Studies;* Figgis's *Studies and Appreciations;* Masefield's *John M. Synge;* More's *The Drift of Romanticism* (Fiona Macleod).

ENGLISH HISTORY	ENGLISH LITERATURE	FOREIGN HISTORY AND LITERATURE
449. Hengist and Horsa land in Britain.	600–700. *Beowulf.*	570–632. Mohammed. *The Koran.*
520, *circa.* King Arthur.	670, *circa.* Cædmon Poems.	800. Charlemagne crowned Emperor.
597. St Augustine comes to England.	673–735. Bede. *Historica Ecclesiastica,* 731.	912. Northmen settle in Normandy.
867. The Danes conquer Northumbria.	750, *c.* Cynewulf Poems.	971–991, *circa. The Nibelungenlied.*
871–901. Alfred, King of Wessex.	755, *c.* Anglo-Saxon *Chronicle* begun.	1000–1241, *c.* The Icelandic *Eddas.*
878. Alfred defeats the Danes. Peace of Wedmore.	991. Last Anglo-Saxon Poem: *The Battle of Maldon.*	
937. Battle of Brunanburh.	950?–1016? Ælfric. *Homilies, c.* 990.	
1000	**1000**	**1000**
1042–1065. Edward the Confessor.	1110. First known Miracle Play in England.	1096. First Crusade.
1066. Battle of Hastings.	1147. Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniæ.*	1155, *c.* Wace's *Brut d'Angleterre.*
1066–1087. William of Normandy.	1154. End of the Anglo-Saxon *Chronicle.*	1189. Third Crusade.
1086. Domesday Book.	1200–1400. French Romances in England.	1212. Children's Crusade.
1133–1186. Oxford Univ. founded.	1205, *c.* Layamon's *Brut.*	1248. St. Louis's Crusade.
1170. Murder of Thomas-à-Becket.	1215, *c. Ormulum.*	1250. Lorris's *Roman de la Rose.*
1189–1199. Richard I.	1225, *c.* The *Ancren Riwle.*	1274. Thomas Aquinas died.
1195. First Complete Parliament.	1270, *c.* English Romances, *Guy of Warwick, Sir Tristrem, etc.*	1282. The Sicilian Vespers.
1199–1216. King John.	1298. Robert of Gloucester's *Chronicle.*	1294, *c.* Dante's *Vita Nuova.*
1215. The Great Charter.		
1230, *c.* Cambridge University founded.		
1300	**1300**	**1300**

ENGLISH HISTORY		ENGLISH LITERATURE		FOREIGN HISTORY AND LITERATURE	
1314.	Battle of Bannockburn.	1320, *c.*	*Cursor Mundi.*	1265–1321. Dante.	*Divina Commedia; c.* 1307–1318.
1327–1377.	Edward III.	1360–1370, *c.*	*The Pearl, Sir Gawaine and the Grene Knight.*	1304–1374. Petrarch,	crowned at Rome, 1341.
1338–1453.	The Hundred Years' War.	1371.	Mandeville's *Travels,* in French.	1313–1375. Boccaccio.	*Decameron,* 1353.
1346.	Battle of Cressy.	1340?–1400.	Geoffrey Chaucer. *Canterbury Tales, c.* 1386.	1240–1302? Cimabue.	"Father of Modern Painting."
1349.	The Black Death.	1332?–1400?	William Langland. *Piers Plowman,* 1362–1398.	1276–1337. Giotto.	Campanile of Florence.
1356.	Battle of Poitiers.	1324–1384.	John Wyclif. Translation of the Bible completed, 1382.	1378–1455. Ghiberti.	Doors of Baptistry, Florence.
1377–1399.	Richard II.	1316?–1395.	John Barbour. *The Bruce,* 1375.	1309–1377. Popes at Avignon.	
1381.	Wat Tyler's Rebellion.	1325?–1408.	John Gower. *Confessio Amantis, c.* 1393.		
1388.	Battle of Otterbourne.	1340, *c.*–1360, *c.*	York Miracle Plays.		
1400		**1400**		**1400**	
1415.	Battle of Agincourt.	1423, *c.*	James I's *King's Quair.*	1415.	John Huss burned.
1455–1485.	Wars of the Roses.	1365?–1450?	Thomas Occleve.	1431.	Execution of Joan of Arc.
1477.	Caxton prints first book in England.	1370?–1451?	John Lydgate. *Siege of Troy, c.* 1410.	1453.	Constantinople taken by the Turks.
1485–1491.	Grocyn and Linacre in Italy.	1468, *c.*	Coventry Miracle Plays.	1471, *c.*	Thomas à Kempis's *Imitation of Christ.*
1483–1485.	Richard III.	1424–1509.	*Paston Letters.*	1486.	Diaz discovers Cape of Good Hope.
1497.	Cabot discovers mainland of America.	1430?–1471?	Sir Thomas Malory. *Morte d'Arthur,* 1469.	1492.	Columbus discovers Am-
		1491.	John Colet's Lectures at Oxford.		

1499.	Colet and Erasmus at Oxford.	1425?–1500?	Robert Henryson.	1452–1498.	Savonarola.
1485–1509.	Henry VII.	1400–1500.	Ballads.	1449–1492.	Lorenzo de Medici.
				1498.	Vasco de Gama discovers route to India.
1500		**1500**		**1500**	
1509–1547.	Henry VIII.	1460–1530?	William Dunbar. *Thistle and Rose*, 1503.	1479–1516.	Ferdinand and Isabella.
1512.	St. Paul's School founded.	1474?–1522.	Gawain Douglas. *Virgil's Æneid*, 1513.	1519.	Charles V of Spain elected Emperor.
1513.	Battle of Flodden.	1483?–1523?	Stephen Hawes. *Pastime of Pleasure*, 1517.	1519–1522.	Magellan sailed round the World.
1519.	Field of the Cloth of Gold.	1530, *c.*	Heywood's *The Four P's*.	1452–1519.	Leonardo da Vinci.
1529.	Fall of Wolsey.	1525.	Berners's *Froissart's Chronicles*.	1483–1520.	Raphael.
1536–1539.	Destruction of Monasteries.	1460–1529.	John Skelton.	1486–1531.	Andrea del Sarto.
1537.	Pilgrimage of Grace.	1478–1535.	Sir Thomas More. *Utopia*, 1516.	1475–1564.	Michael Angelo.
1547–1553.	Edward VI.	1526.	Tyndale's Translation of New Testament.	1477–1576.	Titian.
1548.	Book of Common Prayer.	1535.	Coverdale's Translation of the Bible.	1469–1527.	Machiavelli. *The Prince*, 1517.
1553–1558.	Mary.	1503–1542.	Sir Thomas Wyatt.	1466–1536.	Erasmus. *Praise of Folly*, 1509.
1556.	Burning of Archbishop Cranmer.	1517?–1547.	Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey.	1474–1533.	Ariosto. *Orlando Furioso*, 1515–1532.
1558.	Loss of Calais.	1541, *c.*	Udall's *Ralph Royster Doyster*.		
1558–1603.	Elizabeth.	1557.	*Tottel's Miscellany*.	1473–1543.	Copernicus. Founder of modern astronomy.
1561.	Mary Stuart lands in Scotland.	1490?–1555.	Sir David Lindsay.	1483–1546.	Luther. At the Diet of Worms, 1521.
1576.	First London Theaters, *The Theater*, *The Curtain*.	1560?.	*Gammer Gurton's Needle*.	1509–1564.	Calvin. *Institutes*, 1536.
		1562.	*Gorboduc*.		
		1563.	Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*.	1524–1560.	Du Bellay. "Prince of the Sonnet."
1577.	Drake sails for the Pacific.	1515–1568.	Roger Ascham. *Toxophilus*, 1545.		
1586.	Battle of Zutphen.	1578.	Holinshed's *Chronicle*.		
		1579.	North's *Plutarch's Lives*.		

ENGLISH HISTORY		ENGLISH LITERATURE		FOREIGN HISTORY AND LITERATURE	
1587.	Execution of Mary Stuart.	1554?–1606.	John Lyly. *Euphues*, 1579.	1524–1585.	Ronsard. Father of French lyric poetry.
1588.	Defeat of Spanish Armada.	1554–1600.	Richard Hooker. *Ecclesiastical Polity*, 1594–1618.	1533–1592.	Montaigne. *Essays*, 1580.
1598.	*Globe Theater* built.	1552–1599.	Edmund Spenser. *Faerie Queene*, 1590–1596.	1518–1594.	Tintoretto.
1599.	Expedition of Essex in Ireland.	1554–1586.	Sir Philip Sidney. *Arcadia*, 1590.	1544–1595.	Tasso. *Jerusalem Delivered*, 1581.
1601.	Execution of Essex.	1560–1592.	Robert Greene. *Groatsworth of Wit*, 1592.		
		1564–1593.	Christopher Marlowe. *Tamburlaine*, 1587.		
		1558?–1597?	George Peele. *Old Wives' Tale*, *c.* 1589.		
		1558?–1594?	Thomas Kyd. *Spanish Tragedy*, 1587.		
1600		1600		1600	
1603–1625.	James I.	1561–1626.	Francis Bacon. *Essays*, 1597–1625.	1547–1616.	Cervantes. *Don Quixote*, 1605.
1607.	Settlement of Jamestown, Va.	1564–1616.	William Shakespeare. *Venus and Adonis*, 1593; *Plays*, 1623.	1562–1635.	Lope de Vega. Spanish dramatist.
1611.	King James Version of the Bible.	1584–1616.	Francis Beaumont. *Philaster*, *c.* 1608.	1615.	Hôtel de Rambouillet instituted.
1618.	Sir Walter Raleigh executed.	1579–1625.	John Fletcher. *Faithful Shepherdess*, *c.* 1609.	1555–1628.	Malherbe.
1620.	Landing of Pilgrims at Plymouth.	1558?–1625.	Thomas Lodge. *Rosalynde*, 1590.	1635.	French Academy founded.
1621.	Impeachment of Bacon.	1570?–1627.	Thomas Middleton.	1571–1630.	Kepler. German astronomer.
1625–1649.	Charles I.	1575?–1634.	John Marston.		
		1559?–1634.	George Chapman. *Homer*, 1598–		

1630. Puritans emigrate to New England.
1633. Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury.
1637. Trial of Hampden.
1640. Long Parliament meets.
1641. Execution of Strafford.
1642. Theaters closed.
1642–1651. Civil War.
1642. Battle of Edgehill.
1644. Battle of Marston Moor.
1645. Battle of Naseby.
1649. Execution of Charles I.
1649–1653. Commonwealth.
1653–1658. Oliver Cromwell, Lord Protector.
1653. Barebones Parliament.
1658–1659. Richard Cromwell, Lord Protector.
1660. Restoration.
1660–1685. Charles II.
1662. Royal Society founded.
1664. Dutch war begins.
1665. The Great Plague.
1666. The Fire of London.

1678. Popish Plot.
1683. Rye House Plot.

1685–1689. James II.
1685. Monmouth's Rebellion.

1573–1637. Ben Jonson. *Every Man in his Humor*, 1596.
1581?–1650? Thomas Heywood.
1570?–1641? Thomas Dekker. *Shoemaker's Holiday*, 1600.
1580?–1625. John Webster. *Duchess of Malfi*, 1616.
1583–1640. Philip Massenger.
1586–1640. John Ford.
1563–1631. Michael Drayton. *Polyolbion*, 1613–1622.
1573–1631. John Donne. *Poems*, 1633.
1593–1633. George Herbert. *The Temple*, 1631.
1588–1623. Giles Fletcher. *Christ's Victory*, 1610.
1582–1650. Phineas Fletcher. *Purple Island*, 1633.
1598–1639. Thomas Carew. *Poems*, 1640.
1609–1641. Sir John Suckling.
1618–1658. Richard Lovelace. *Lucasta*, 1649.
1605–1654. William Habington. *Castara*, 1634.
1577–1640. Robert Burton. *Anatomy of Melancholy*, 1621.
1574–1656. Joseph Hall. *Characters*, 1608.
1608–1661. Thomas Fuller. *Worthies*, 1662.
1613–1667. Jeremy Taylor. *Holy Living*, 1650.
1613?–1650? Richard Crashaw. *Steps to the Temple*, 1646.

1599–1641. Van Dyck.
1599–1660. Velasquez.

1564–1642. Galileo.
1596–1650. Descartes.
1585–1642. Richelieu.
1618–1648. Thirty Years' War in Germany.

1588–1653. Salmasius. Frenchscholar.

1623–1662. Pascal. *Pensées*, 1670.
1610–1663. La Calprenède. *Cassandre*, 1640.
1607–1701. Mlle. de Scudéry. *Clélie*, 1656.
1626–1696. Madam de Sévigné.
1613–1680. La Rochefoucauld. *Maxims*, 1665.
1636–1711. Boileau. *L'Art Poétique*, 1674.
1645–1696. La Bruyère. *Caractères de Théophraste*, 1688.
1627–1704. Bossuet.
1643–1715. Louis XIV.
1622–1673. Molière. *Le Misanthrope*, 1666.
1606–1684. Corneille. *Le Cid*, 1636.
1639–1699. Racine. *Iphigénie*, 1674.
1621–1695. La Fontaine. *Fables*, 1668.
1651–1715. Fénelon. *Télémaque*, 1699.

ENGLISH HISTORY	
1688.	English Revolution.
1689–1702.	William and Mary.
1689.	Bill of Rights.
1690.	Battle of the Boyne.
1692.	Massacre of Glencoe.
1693.	Beginning of the National Debt.
1694.	Bank of England established.
1695.	Censorship of the Press abolished.
1700	
1702–1714.	Queen Anne.
1702.	First Daily Newspaper.
1642–1727.	Sir Isaac Newton. *Principia*, 1687.
1704.	Battle of Blenheim.
1714–1727.	George I.
1720.	South Sea Bubble.
1727–1760.	George II.

ENGLISH LITERATURE	
1622?–1695.	Henry Vaughan. *Secular Poems*, 1646.
1588–1679.	Thomas Hobbes. *Leviathan*, 1651.
1618–1667.	Abraham Cowley. *Poems*, 1656.
1608–1674.	John Milton. *Comus*, 1634; *Paradise Lost*, 1667.
1591–1674.	Robert Herrick. *Hesperides*, 1648.
1621–1678.	Andrew Marvell. *Poems*, 1681.
1605–1687.	Edmund Waller. *Poems*, 1645.
1612–1680.	Samuel Butler. *Hudibras*, 1663.
1605–1682.	Sir Thomas Browne. *Religio Medici*, 1642.
1593–1683.	Isaac Walton. *Complete Angler*, 1653.
1628–1688.	John Bunyan. *Pilgrim's Progress*, 1678.
1633–1703.	Samuel Pepys. *Diary*, 1660–1669.
1620–1706.	John Evelyn. *Diary*, 1641–1697.
1700	
1631–1700.	John Dryden. *Annus Mirabilis*, 1667; *Fables*, 1700.
1632–1704.	John Locke. *Human Understanding*, 1690.
1678–1707.	George Farquhar.
1640–1715.	William Wycherley.
1670–1729.	William Congreve. *Way of the*

FOREIGN HISTORY AND LITERATURE	
1600–1681.	Calderon. Spanish dramatist.
1587–1679.	Vondel. "The Dutch Shakespeare."
1632–1677.	Spinoza.
1700	
1646–1716.	Leibnitz.
1668–1747.	Le Sage. *Gil Blas*, 1715.
1688–1763.	Marivaux. *Marianne*, 1731.
1694–1778.	Voltaire. *La Henriade*, 1794

1738. Rise of the Methodists.
1746. Battle of Culloden.
1751. Clive in India.
1755. Braddock's Defeat.
1759. Death of Wolfe at Quebec.
1760–1820. George III.

1765. Watts invents steam engine.
1768. Arkwright invents spinning machine.

1766. Repeal of Stamp Act.
1769. *Letters of Junius.*
1776. Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations.*
1776. American Declaration of Independence.
1772. *Morning Post* established.
1785. *London Times* established.

1717–1779. David Garrick.
1723–1792. Sir Joshua Reynolds.
1727–1788. Thomas Gainsborough.

1773. Boston Tea Party.
1773. Hastings Governor of India.
1775. Battle of Bunker's Hill.

1664?–1726. Sir John Vanbrugh.
1679–1718. Thomas Parnell. *The Hermit.* 1710.
1664–1721. Matthew Prior. *Country Mouse.* 1687.
1672–1719. Joseph Addison. *Spectator,* 1711.
1672–1729. Richard Steele. *Tatler,* 1709.
1660?–1731. Daniel Defoe. *Robinson Crusoe,* 1719.
1685–1732. John Gay. *Beggar's Opera.* 1728.
1688–1744. Alexander Pope. *Rape of the Lock,* 1712.
1667–1745. Jonathan Swift. *Gulliver's Travels,* 1726.
1700–1748. James Thomson. *Seasons.* 1726.
1686–1758. Allan Ramsay. *Gentle Shepherd,* 1725.
1714–1763. William Shenstone. *Schoolmistress,* 1737.
1721–1759. William Collins. *Odes,* 1746.
1689–1761. Samuel Richardson. *Pamela.* 1740.
1707–1754. Henry Fielding. *Tom Jones.* 1749.
1713–1768. Laurence Sterne. *Tristram Shandy.* 1759.
1721–1771. Tobias Smollett. *Roderick Random,* 1748.
1716–1771. Thomas Gray. *Elegy,* 1751.
1728–1774. Oliver Goldsmith. *Vicar of Wakefield.* 1766.

1737–1814. Bernardin de St. Pierre. *Paul et Virginie,* 1788.

1703–1758. Jonathan Edwards.
1706–1790. Benjamin Franklin.
1732–1799. George Washington.
1736–1799. Patrick Henry.
1722–1803. Samuel Adams.
1757–1804. Alexander Hamilton.
1743–1826. Thomas Jefferson.

ENGLISH HISTORY	ENGLISH LITERATURE	FOREIGN HISTORY AND LITERATURE
1777. Washington at Valley Forge.	1709–1784. Samuel Johnson. *Dictionary*, 1755.	
1781. Surrender of Cornwallis.	1728–1790. Thomas Warton. *History of English Poetry*, 1774.	
1783. Treaty of Paris.	1729–1811. Thomas Percy. *Reliques*, 1765.	
1786. Trial of Warren Hastings.	1736–1796. James Macpherson. *Poems of Ossian*, 1760.	1789. Storming of the Bastille.
1788. First British Settlement in Australia.	1752–1770. Thomas Chatterton. *Rowley Poems*, 1764.	1792. September Massacres.
1790. Burke's *Reflections on the French Revolution*.	1711–1776. David Hume. *History of England*, 1754–1762.	1793. Louis XVI executed.
1797. Battle of Camperdown.	1737–1794. Edward Gibbon. *Decline and Fall*, 1776–1788.	1729–1781. Lessing. *Minnavon Barnhelm*, 1763.
1798. Battle of the Nile.	1717–1797. Horace Walpole. *Otranto*, 1764.	1747–1794. Bürger. *Lenore*, 1774.
	1729–1797. Edmund Burke. *Conciliation with America*, 1775.	1724–1803. Klopstock.
	1759–1796. Robert Burns. *Poems*, 1786.	1744–1803. Herder.
	1731–1800. William Cowper. *Task*, 1785.	1733–1813. Wieland.
	1735–1803. James Beattie. *The Minstrel*, 1771.	1688–1772. Swedenborg.
	1751–1816. Richard B. Sheridan. *The Rivals*, 1775.	
	1764–1823. Mrs. Radcliffe. *Udolpho*, 1794.	
	1752–1840. Frances Burney. *Evelina*, 1778.	
	1754–1832. George Crabbe. *The Village*, 1783.	1749–1803. Alfieri.
	1757–1827. William Blake. *Songs of Innocence*, 1789.	

1802.	*Edinburgh Review* established.
1809.	*Quarterly Review* established.
1817.	*Blackwood's Magazine* established.
1803.	War with France.
1805.	Battle of Trafalgar, Death of Nelson.
1807.	Abolition of Slave Trade.
1808.	Peninsular War.
1812.	War with America.
1815.	Battle of Waterloo.
1816–1818.	Labor Riots.
1819.	Manchester Massacre.
1819.	First Atlantic Steamship.
1820–1830.	George IV.
1824.	*Westminster Review* established.
1828.	*The Spectator* and *The Athenæum* established.
1829.	Catholic Emancipation Bill.
1830–1837.	William IV.
1830.	Liverpool & Manchester Railway opened.
1832.	Reform Bill.
1833.	Emancipation of Slaves Act.

1770–1850.	William Wordsworth. *Lyrical Ballads*, 1798.
1772–1834.	Samuel T. Coleridge. *Ancient Mariner*, 1798.
1774–1843.	Robert Southey. *Thalaba*, 1801.
1771–1832.	Walter Scott. *Lay of Last Minstrel*, 1805.
1775–1817.	Jane Austen. *Sense and Sensibility*, 1811.
1788–1824.	Lord Byron. *Childe Harold*, 1812.
1792–1822.	Percy B. Shelley. *Adonais*, 1821.
1795–1821.	John Keats. *Poems*, 1817.
1777–1844.	Thomas Campbell. *Pleasures of Hope*, 1799.
1779–1852.	Thomas Moore. *Lalla Rookh*, 1817.
1767–1849.	Maria Edgeworth. *Castle Rackrent*, 1800.
1775–1834.	Charles Lamb. *Essays of Elia*, 1822.
1785–1859.	Thomas De Quincey. *Confessions of an Opium Eater*, 1821.
1778–1830.	William Hazlitt.
1784–1859.	Leigh Hunt. *Story of Rimini*, 1816.
1799–1845.	Thomas Hood. *Whims and Oddities*, 1826.
1775–1864.	W. S. Landor. *Imaginary Conversations*, 1824–1853.
1792–1866.	John Keble. *Christian Year*, 1827.
1800–1859.	Thomas B. Macaulay. *Milton*, 1825; *History*, 1848–1860.

1800.	Battles of Marengo and Hohenlinden.
1759–1805.	Schiller. *Wilhelm Tell*, 1804.
1749–1832.	Goethe. *Faust*, 1808.
1763–1825.	Jean Paul Richter.
1797–1856.	Heine. *Buch des Lieder*, 1827.
1771–1810.	Charles Brockden Brown. *Wieland*, 1798.
1754–1812.	Joel Barlow. *Columbiad*, 1807.
1752–1832.	Philip Freneau. *Poems*, 1786.
1724–1804.	Kant.
1762–1814.	Fichte.
1770–1831.	Hegel.
1775–1854.	Schelling.
1788–1860.	Schopenhauer.
1848.	Revolution in France.
1852.	Napoleon III made Emperor.
1766–1817.	Mme. de Staël.
1799–1850.	Honoré de Balzac.
1798–1857.	Auguste Comte.
1810–1857.	Alfred de Musset.
1780–1857.	Béranger.

ENGLISH HISTORY	
1834.	National Education established.
1837–1901.	Victoria.
1837.	First Telegraph used.
1837.	Rise of Trades Unions and Chartism.
1842.	Chartist Riots.
1846.	Repeal of Corn Laws.
1850.	Free Libraries established.
1806–1873.	John Stuart Mill. *Logic*, 1843.
1852.	Death of Duke of Wellington.
1854–1856.	Crimean War.
1857.	Indian Mutiny.
1859.	*Cornhill Magazine* established.
1861.	Death of Prince Consort.
1809–1882.	Charles Darwin. *Origin of Species*, 1859.
1820–1903.	Herbert Spencer. *First Principles*, 1862.
1869.	Girton College for Women founded.
1878.	Zulu War.
1885.	Fall of Khartoum.

ENGLISH LITERATURE	
1806–1861.	Elizabeth B. Browning. *Poems*, 1826.
1809–1892.	Alfred Tennyson. *Poems*, 1830; *In Memoriam*, 1850.
1812–1889.	Robert Browning. *Pauline*, 1833; *Ring and Book*, 1868.
1816–1855.	Charlotte Brontë. *Jane Eyre*, 1847.
1795–1881.	Thomas Carlyle. *French Revolution*, 1837.
1803–1873.	Bulwer-Lytton. *Last Days of Pompeii*, 1834.
1812–1870.	Charles Dickens. *Pickwick Papers*, 1837.
1811–1863.	W. M. Thackeray. *Vanity Fair*, 1847.
1815–1882.	Anthony Trollope. *Barchester Towers*, 1857.
1814–1884.	Charles Reade. *Cloister and Hearth*, 1860.
1819–1880.	George Eliot. *Romola*, 1863.
1825–1900.	R. D. Blackmore. *Lorna Doone*, 1869.
1819–1875.	Charles Kingsley. *Hypatia*, 1853.
1801–1890.	John Henry Newman. *Tract XC*, 1841.
1819–1861.	Arthur Hugh Clough. *Poems*, 1862.
1822–1888.	Matthew Arnold. *Essays in Criticism*, 1865.

FOREIGN HISTORY AND LITERATURE	
1783–1859.	Irving. *Sketch Book*, 1819.
1794–1878.	Bryant. *Poems*, 1821.
1789–1851.	Cooper. *The Spy*, 1821.
1809–1849.	Poe. *Tamerlane*, 1827.
1782–1852.	Webster.
1796–1859.	Prescott.
1800–1891.	Bancroft.
1804–1864.	Hawthorne. *Twice Told Tales*, 1837.
1803–1882.	Emerson. *Nature*, 1836.
1807–1882.	Longfellow. *Voices of the Night*, 1839.
1807–1892.	Whittier. *Poems*, 1838.
1809–1894.	Holmes. *Poems*, 1836.
1819–1891.	Lowell. *A Year's Life*, 1841.
1804–1869.	Sainte-Beuve.
1803–1870.	Dumas père.
1802–1885.	Victor Hugo.

1886. Home Rule Bill introduced.
1887. Queen's Jubilee.
1899. Boer War.
1901–1910. Edward VII.
1910– George V.

1809–1883. Edward Fitzgerald. *Omar Khayyam*, 1859.
1819–1900. John Ruskin. *Modern Painters*, 1843–1860.
1828–1882. Dante Gabriel Rossetti. *Poems*, 1870.
1828–1909. George Meredith. *The Egoist*, 1879.
1834–1896. William Morris. *Earthly Paradise*, 1868.
1839–1894. Walter Pater. *Marius the Epicurean*, 1885.
1850–1894. Robert Louis Stevenson. *Treasure Island*, 1883.
1837–1909. A. C. Swinburne. *Atalanta in Calydon*, 1864.
1840 ——. Thomas Hardy. *Return of the Native*, 1878.

1785–1873. Manzoni.
1805–1875. Hans Christian Andersen.
1813–1883. Richard Wagner.
1818–1883. Turgeniéff.
1828–1906. Henrik Ibsen.
1828–1910. Tolstoi.

GENERAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

Collections for the Classroom

Bronson: *English Poems.* 4 vols. University of Chicago Press.

Bullen: *Elizabethan Lyrics.* Nimmo.

Child: *English and Scottish Ballads.* (Cambridge Edition.) Houghton.

Cook: *Literary Middle English Reader.* Ginn.

Cook and Tinker (C. and T.): *Select Translations from Old English Poetry and Prose.* 2 vols. Ginn.

Craik: *English Prose Selections.* 5 vols. Macmillan.

Cunliffe: *Century Readings in English Literature.* Century Co.

Garnett: *English Prose* (From Elizabeth to Victoria). Ginn.

Gummere: *Old English Ballads.* Ginn.

Gummere: *The Oldest English Epic* (Translations of *Beowulf* and other Anglo-Saxon epics). Macmillan.

Hadow: *Oxford Treasury of English Literature* (Oxford Tr.). 3 vols. Clarendon Press.

Manly: *English Poetry and Prose.* 2 vols. Ginn.

Morris and Skeat: *Specimens of Early English.* 2 vols. Clarendon Press.

Page: *British Poets of the Nineteenth Century.* Sanborn.

Palgrave: *Golden Treasury of Songs and Lyrics* (G. T. S.). First and Second Series. Macmillan.

Pancoast: *English Prose and Verse* (From Beowulf to Stevenson). Holt.

Pancoast and Spaeth (P. and S.): *Early English Poems* (From *Beowulf* to Spenser). Holt.

Quiller-Couch: *Oxford Book of Ballads.* Clarendon Press.

Quiller-Couch: *Oxford Book of English Verse.* Clarendon Press.

Quiller-Couch: *Oxford Book of Victorian Verse.* Clarendon Press.

Schelling: *Elizabethan Lyrics.* Ginn.

Schelling: *Seventeenth Century Lyrics.* Ginn.

Stedman: *Victorian Anthology.* Houghton.

Ward: *The English Poets.* 4 vols. Macmillan.

Weston: *Chief Middle English Poets* (Translations). Houghton.

Weston: *Romance, Vision, and Satire* (Translations of alliterative poems of the fourteenth century). Houghton.

Biography

English Men of Letters Series (E. M. L.). Edited by John Morley. 67 vols. This excellent series includes every English author of importance, and is the most available and useful in class work for both biography and criticism. Macmillan.

Great Writers Series (G. W.). Edited by Eric S. Robertson. 26 vols. Second to the preceding series in convenience and value. Scribner.

Literary Lives Series. Edited by Robertson Nicoll. 6 vols. Scribner.

Lives of Great Writers. Hinchman and Gummere. (Thirty-three biographies in a single volume.) Houghton.

Literary History and Criticism

Arnold: *Essays in Criticism.* 2 vols. Macmillan.

Atkins: *English Criticism.* Dutton.

Baldwin: *English Mediæval Literature.* Longmans.

Beers: *English Romanticism in the Eighteenth Century.* Holt.

Beers: *English Romanticism in the Nineteenth Century.* Holt.

Birrell: *Obiter Dicta.* 2 vols. Scribner.

Birrell: *Res Judicatæ.* Scribner.

Birrell: *Men, Women, and Books.* Scribner.

Boas: *Shakespeare and his Predecessors.* Scribner.

Bradley: *Oxford Lectures on Poetry.* Macmillan.

Brooke: *Four Victorian Poets.* Putnam.

Brooke: *History of Early English Literature.* Macmillan.

Brooke: *The Tudor Drama.* Houghton.

Brownell: *Victorian Prose Masters.* Scribner.

Burton: *Masters of the English Novel.* Holt.

Cambridge History of English Literature. Edited by Ward and Waller. 14 vols. Cyclopædic and authoritative, with extensive bibliographies. Putnam.

Chambers: *Cyclopædia of English Literature.* (New Edition.) 3 vols. Lippincott.

Chambers: *The Mediæval Stage.* 2 vols. Clarendon Press.

Courthope: *History of English Poetry.* 6 vols. Macmillan.

Cross: *Development of the English Novel.* Macmillan.

Dobson: *Eighteenth Century Vignettes.* 3 vols. Dodd.

Dowden: *Studies in Literature.* Kegan Paul.

Dowden: *Transcripts and Studies.* Kegan Paul.

Garnett and Gosse: *English Literature: An Illustrated Record.* 4 vols. Macmillan.

Gates: *Studies and Appreciations.* Macmillan.

Gosse: *History of Eighteenth Century Literature.* Macmillan.

Gosse: *Modern English Literature.* Appleton.

HANDBOOKS OF ENGLISH LITERATURE. Edited by J. W. HALES. 12 vols. Macmillan.
DENNIS: *Age of Pope.*
GARNETT: *Age of Dryden.*
HERFORD: *Age of Wordsworth.*
MASTERMAN: *Age of Milton.*
SECCOMBE: *Age of Johnson; of Shakespeare.*
SNELL: *Age of Alfred; of Chaucer; of Transition* (1400–1580).
WALKER: *Age of Tennyson.*
HUTTON: *Literary Essays.* Macmillan.
JUSSERAND: *Literary History of the English People.* 3 vols. Putnam.
LOWELL: *Literary Essays.* 5 vols. Houghton.
MACKAIL: *The Springs of Helicon* (From Chaucer to Milton). Longmans.
MACKENZIE: *The English Moralities.* Ginn.
MAIR: *Modern English Literature* (From Chaucer to Tennyson). Holt.
MORE: *Shelburne Essays.* 7 vols. Putnam.
MORLEY, HENRY: *English Writers* (E. W.). 11 vols. Cassell.
MORLEY: *Studies in Literature.* Macmillan.
NETTLETON: *Drama of the Restoration and Eighteenth Century.* Macmillan.
PATER: *Appreciations.* Macmillan.
PAYNE: *Greater Poets of the Nineteenth Century.* Holt.
PHELPS: *Beginnings of the English Romantic Movement.* Ginn.
RALEIGH: *The English Novel* (From its origin to Scott). Scribner.
REED: *English Lyrical Poetry.* Yale University Press.
SAINTSBURY: *Corrected Impressions* (Victorian Authors). Dodd.
SAINTSBURY: *Elizabethan Literature.* Macmillan.
SAINTSBURY: *The English Novel.* Dutton.
SAINTSBURY: *Essays in Literature,* 1780–1860. 2 vols. Scribner.
SAINTSBURY: *The Flourishing of Romance.* Scribner.
SAINTSBURY: *Nineteenth Century Literature.* Macmillan.
SAINTSBURY: *Short History of English Literature.* Macmillan.
SCHELLING: *English Dramatic Poetry.* Dutton.
SCHELLING: *English Literature in the Lifetime of Shakespeare.* Holt.
SCHELLING: *The English Lyric.* Houghton.
SCHELLING: *History of the Elizabethan Drama.* 2 vols. Houghton.
SCHOFIELD: *English Literature from the Norman Conquest to Chaucer.* Macmillan.
SIMONDS: *Introduction to the Study of English Fiction.* Heath.
STEDMAN: *Victorian Poets.* Houghton.
STEPHEN: *Hours in a Library.* 4 vols. Putnam.
SWINBURNE: *Essays and Studies.* Scribner.
SWINBURNE: *Studies in Prose and Poetry.* Scribner.
SYMONDS: *Shakespeare's Predecessors in the English Drama.* Macmillan.

SYMONS: *The Romantic Movement in English Poetry.* Dutton.
TAINE: *History of English Literature.* 3 vols. Holt.
TEN BRINK: *Early English Literature.* 3 vols. Holt.
THORNDIKE: *Tragedy.* Houghton.
WALKER: *The English Essay and Essayists.* Dutton.
WALKER: *Literature of the Victorian Era.* Putnam.
WARD: *History of English Dramatic Literature to the Reign of Queen Anne.* 3 vols. Macmillan.
WINCHESTER: *A Group of English Essayists in the Early Nineteenth Century.* Macmillan.

LANGUAGE AND POETICS

ALDEN: *Introduction to Poetry.* Holt.
BRADLEY: *The Making of English.* Macmillan.
CHAMPNEYS: *History of English.* Macmillan.
EMERSON: *Brief History of the English Language.* Macmillan.
GREENOUGH and KITTREDGE: *Words and their Ways in English Speech.* Macmillan.
GUMMERE: *Handbook of Poetics.* Ginn.
LOUNSBURY: *History of the English Language.* Holt.
SAINTSBURY: *Historical Manual of English Prosody.* Macmillan.

ORIGINAL TEXTS AND SCHOOL EDITIONS

Belles-Lettres Series	Heath
Athenæum Press Series	Ginn
Arber's English Reprints	Macmillan
Temple Classics	Dutton
The King's Classics	Luce
Masterpieces of English Drama	American Book Co.
Merrill's English Texts	Merrill
Maynard's English Classics	Merrill
Riverside Literature Series (R. L. S.)	Houghton
English Readings	Holt
Standard English Classics	Ginn
Pocket Classics	Macmillan
Academy Classics	Allyn and Bacon
Cambridge Literature Series	Sanborn
Gateway Series	American Book Co.
Longmans' English Classics	Longmans
Lake English Classics	Scott, Foresman
Heath's English Classics	Heath
Scribner English Classics	Scribner
Students' Series of English Classics	Sibley
Standard Literature Texts	Newson
Clarendon Press Series (Cl. Press)	Clarendon Press

A LITERARY MAP
OF
ENGLAND
SCALE OF MILES
0 10 20 30 40 50 60
SCOTLAND
NORTHUMBERLAND
CUMBERLAND
WESTMORELAND
DURHAM
YORK
LANCASHIRE
LINCOLN
IRELAND
IRISH SEA
NORTH SEA
North Channel
Firth of Forth
Firth of Clyde
Solway Firth
Morecambe Bay
Dunfermline
Edinburgh
Glasgow
Greenock
Hawthornden
Lanark
Kilmarnock
Ayr
Auchinleck
Alloway Kirk
Craigenputtock
Dumfries
Ettrick
Selkirk
Abbotsford
Melrose Abbey
Dryburgh Abbey
Lammermoor Hills
Berwick-on-Tweed
LINDISFARNE
FARNE IS.
Flodden Field
Warkworth Castle
Newcastle
Tynemouth
Jarrow
Durham
Hartlepool
Whitby
North York Moors
Scarborough
Hipswell
Coxwold
Stillington
York
Stamford Bridge
Hull
Leeds
Haworth
Bradford
Halifax
Wakefield
Hampole
Manchester
Liverpool
Birkenhead
Knutsford
Sheffield
Louth
Holyhead
HOLY I.
Mull of Galloway
Castletown
ISLE OF MAN
Cockermouth
Carlisle
Gretna Green
Annan
Ecclefechan
Keswick
Appleby
Grasmere
Rydal Mt.
Windermere
Hawkshead
Brantwood
Mt. Skiddaw
Derwent Water
Mt. Helvellyn
Lancaster
Holy Island
Chester
Somersby

Cardigan Bay
St. George's Channel
Bristol Channel
ENGLISH CHANNEL
Strait of Dover
Beachy Head
I. OF WIGHT
I. OF THANET
River Thames
Lands End
Lizard Pt.
Eddystone L.H.
Dieppe
Calais
Boulogne
Rye
Hastings
Brighton
Battle Abbey
Chichester
Portsmouth
Southampton
Farringford
Bournemouth
Dorchester
Exeter
Ottery St. Mary
Plymouth
Dartmouth
Torquay
Tavistock
Dartmoor
Dean Prior
Tintagel
Falmouth
Penzance
St. Ives
Bideford
Clovelly
Barnstaple
Lynton
Porlock
Exmoor
Quantock Hills
Taunton
Glastonbury
Wells
Bristol
Bath
Clevedon
Malmesbury
Kelmscott
Tintern Abbey
Monmouth
Caerleon
Cardiff
Swansea
Pembroke
Milford Haven
St. Davids Head
Caermarthen
Brecon
Newton
Llanthony Abbey
Goodrich Castle
Hereford
Ludlow
New Radnor
Cardigan
Montgomery
Shrewsbury
Lichfield
Birmingham
Coventry
Erdley
Worcester
Kenilworth
Rugby
Warwick
Stratford
Northampton
Olney
Banbury
Tewkesbury
Gloucester
Woodstock
Oxford
Buckingham
Wantage
Malmesbury
Milston
Stonehenge
Amesbury
Bemerton
Salisbury
Winchester
Steventon
Eversley
Guildford
Moor Park
Waverley
Aldworth
Dorking
Field Place
Penshurst
Tunbridge Wells
Rochester
Allington
Maidstone
Canterbury
Dover
Gadshill
Greenwich
Waltham Abbey
Chelmsford
Maldon
Ipswich
Harwich
Cambridge
Huntingdon
Bedford
Elstow
Ely
Norwich
Lowestoft
Yarmouth
Great Yarmouth
Kings Lynn
Peterborough
Nisseby
Alnwick
Ely
Bury St. Edmunds
Aldborough
Hertford
Ware
St. Albans
Beaconsfield
Stoke Poges
Horton
Windsor
Eton
Runnimede
Harrow
Richmond
Twickenham
Strawberry Hill
Hampshire
Southampton
Chichester
Rye
Boulogne
Dieppe
Longitude West from Greenwich Longitude East
5° 4° 3° 2° 1° 0° 1° 50° 51° 52°
L.L. POATES CO., N.Y.

INDEX

Absalom and Achitophel, 270.
Abt Vogler, Browning's, 526.
Adam Bede, 463, 465, 466.
Addison, Joseph, 281, 285, 288; life, 290–292, 297; writings, 292, 295–297.
Adonais, Shelley's, 426, 428.
Advancement of Learning, 149.
Ælfric's *Homilies*, 27, 35.
Aids to Reflection, Coleridge's, 388.
Albion's England, Warner's, 131.
Alchemist, The, Jonson's, 209.
Alexander's Feast, 271.
Alfred, King, 6, 24–27, 34; his *Proverbs*, 35.
Allegory, mediæval, 44, 57, 58, 68, 87; in *Piers Plowman*, 57; of *Faerie Queene*, 122; Bunyan's, 240.
All for Love, Dryden's, 269.
All's Well that Ends Well, 189.
Amelia, Fielding's, 319, 323.
Amoretti, Spenser's, 124.
Anatomy of Melancholy, 223.
Ancient Mariner, The, 372, 386, 388.
Ancren Riwle, The, 42.
Andrea del Sarto, 525.
Andreas, 22.
Angles, 4, 5.
Anglo-Saxon, use of the name, 5; language, 15; versification, 15; characteristics of the literature, 29.
Annus Mirabilis, Dryden's, 267.
Antony and Cleopatra, 202, 203, 269.
Apologia pro Vita Sua, 501.
Apologie for Poetrie, Sidney's, 126.
Appreciations, Pater's, 500.
Arcadia, Sidney's, 126, 138.
Areopagitica, 151, 222, 254.
Argument against Abolishing Christianity, 285.
Arnold, Dr. Thomas, 505.
Arnold, Matthew, 502–505; critic, 503; preacher of culture, 504; educator, 505; poet, 509–510; on Shelley, 424; on Keats, 437; allusions to, 258, 284, 338, 383, 423.
Ars Poetica, Horace's, 265, 304.
Arthur, King, 2, 37, 38.
Arthurian romances, 47, 92.
Ascham, Roger, 102.
Astræa Redux, Dryden's, 267.
Astrophel and Stella, 127, 129.
As You Like It, 187, 194.
Atalanta in Calydon, 537.
At a Solemn Music, 246.
Aucassin and Nicolete, 62.
Augustine at Canterbury, 16.
Aurora Leigh, 528, 530.
Austen, Jane, 324, 392–394, 450.
Authorized Version of the Bible, 220.

Bacon, Francis, 143-150; relations with Essex, 144; his fall, 144; character, 145; philosophical works, 148; indifference to literature, 149; allusions to, 102, 139, 167, 219, 220, 246, 264.
Bæda, or Bede, 17, 25, 26, 35, 37.
Ballads, 89–91; revival of, 350.
Barbour's *Bruce*, 86.
Barchester Towers, Trollope's, 471.
Barnfield, Richard, 131.
Barrack-Room Ballads, 481.
Barrie, James M., 549.
Bartholomew Fair, Jonson's, 209.
Battle of Brunanburh, The, 24, 28.
Battle of Maldon, The, 24.
Battle of the Books, The, 283.
Beattie, James, 349.
Beaumont, Francis, 211.

Beckford, William, 391.
Beggar's Opera, 310.
Bells and Pomegranates, 522.
Beloved Vagabond, The, 551.
Bennett, Arnold, 550.
Bentley, Richard, 284.
Beowulf, 7–12, 58, 536.
Bestiaries, 41.
Bible, Wyclif's translation, 59, 78, 105; influence of, 105; Tyndale's translation, 106; *Authorized Version*, 220.
Biographia Literaria, 388.
Black Death, 55.
Blackmore, Richard D., 482.
Blackwood's Magazine, 403.
Blair, Robert, 350.
Blake, William, 361–362, 371.
Blank verse, first use of, 109; in *Gorboduc*, 166; improved by Marlowe, 178; perfected by Shakespeare, 204; decadent form, 212; Milton's, 258; Thomson's, 347; Tennyson's, 519.
Bleak House, 454.
Blind Harry's *Wallace*, 86.
Blot in the 'Scutcheon, A, 522.
Boccaccio, 69, 84.
Boethius, 26, 76.
Boileau, 276, 290; his *Art Poétique*, 265, 304.
Bolingbroke, Viscount, Henry St. John, 285, 302, 307, 337.
Book of Airs, Campion's, 131.
Border Minstrelsy, Scott's, 351.
Boswell, James, 330.
Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich, 511.
Bourne, Vincent, 357.
Bowles, William Lisle, 384.
Breton, Nicholas, 131.
Bride of Lammermoor, The, 400.
Britannia's Pastorals, 225.
Britons, The, 1–4.
Broken Heart, The, Ford's, 214.
Brontë sisters, Charlotte, Emily, Anne, 469.
Brooke, Rupert, 545.
Brooke, Stopford, quoted, 12, 21, 194, 246, 308, 388, 511, 534.
Browne, Sir Thomas, 220–222.
Browne, William, 225.
Browning, Elizabeth Barrett, 254, 382, 528–530; invalidism, 529; artistic faults and merits, 530.
Browning, Robert, 507, 520–528; compared with Tennyson, 521; marriage, 522; character, 523; poet of the arts, 525; style, 526; philosophy, 528.
Brut, Layamon's, 37; Wace's, 37.
Buckingham's *Rehearsal*, 270.
Bulwer-Lytton, Edward, 449, 450.
Bunyan, John, 122, 220, 236–241.
Burke, Edmund, 327, 333, 337–341.
Burney, Frances, 323.
Burns, Robert, 362–368, 371; visit to Edinburgh, 364; character, 365; patriotism, 366.
Burton, Robert, 223.
Bussy d'Amboy, 213.
Butler, Samuel, 263.
Byron, Lord, George Gordon, 416–423; compared with Shelley, 416; marriage, 418; heroic death, 419; personal qualities, 420; on Keats, 433; allusions to, 383, 437, 515, 521.

Cædmon, 17–21, 40.
Caleb Williams, Godwin's, 329, 391.
Camden's *Annals of Queen Elizabeth*, 139.
Campaign, The, Addison's, 291.
Campbell, Thomas, 438.
Campion, Thomas, 130.
Canterbury Tales, 72–76.
Carew, Thomas, 210, 230.
Carey, Henry, 309.
Carlyle, Jane Welsh, 490, 522.
Carlyle, Thomas, 489–494; life at Craigenputtock, 490; struggle for fame, 491; teachings, 493; personality, 494; on Burns, 368; on Coleridge, 387; on Scott, 399; quoted, 448, 513.

Cary, Henry Francis, 404.
Casa Guidi Windows, 530.
Castara, Habington's, 229.
Castle of Indolence, 348.
Castle of Otranto, 345, 391.
Catiline, Jonson's, 210.
Cato, Addison's, 292.
Cavaliers, 218, 229.
Caxton, William, 91.
Celtic literature, 2, 47, 87, 346.
Celtic Renaissance, 546.
Cenci, The, Shelley's, 429.
Centuries of Meditations, 229.
Chapman, George, 140, 212, 431.
Characters of Virtues and Vices, 150.
Characters, Overbury's, 150; Fuller's, 223.
Charles II, character of, 262.
Chartism, Carlyle's, 493.
Chatterton, Thomas, 356.
Chaucer, Geoffrey, 63–80; life and character, 65–68; *Canterbury Tales*, 72-76; prose works, 76; dramatic quality, 77; realism, 77; humor, 79; influence, 80; his successors in England, 83; in Scotland, 86; allusions to, 43, 52, 58, 83, 85, 87, 92, 96, 125, 221, 272, 535, 537.
Chesterfield, Lord, 282.
Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, 418, 421–422.
Children of the Mist, 550.
Child's Garden of Verses, A, 479.
Chivalry, romances of, 45–49; social life of, 54; last poets of, 229.
Christ, Cynewulf's, 22.
Christabel, Coleridge's, 387, 389, 434, 533.
Christian Hero, The, Steele's, 292.
Christian Year, The, Keble's, 501.
Christmas Carol, A, 454.
Christ's Victory and Triumph, 225.
Chronicle, The Saxon, 27.
Chronicle plays, 200, 214.
Church, satirized by Langland, 58; by Chaucer, 73.
Cibber, Colley, 277, 307.
Cicero, 102, 104, 337.
Citizen of the World, 332.
Clarendon's *History of the Rebellion*, 274.
Clarissa Harlowe, Richardson's, 317, 323.
Clarke, Charles Cowden, 430.
Classical learning, 99, 102.
Classicism, and romanticism in drama, 164, 168, 169, 205, 207; French classicism, 265, 280, 281, 304; Jonson's, 210; culmination of, 313; reaction against, 344.
Cleanness, 49.
Cloister and the Hearth, The, 470.
Clough, Arthur Hugh, 509, 510–511.
Cœlum Britannicum, Carew's, 210.
Coffee houses, 293.
Coleridge, Hartley, 448.
Coleridge, Samuel Taylor, 371, 377, 384–390; visits Germany, 386; opium habit, 387; Highgate refuge, 387.
Colet, John, 100.
Colin Clouts Come Home Againe, 119.
Collier, Jeremy, 278.
Collins, William, 351–352.
Comic Annuals, Hood's, 439.
Complete Angler, The, 224.
Comus, 209, 211, 247, 252.
Conciliation with America, 339.
Confessio Amantis, 81.
Confessions of an English Opium Eater, 410.
Congreve, William, 277.
Conquest of Granada, The, 269.
Conrad, Joseph, 551.
Cooper's Hill, Denham's, 234, 304.
Copernicus, 100.
Coriolanus, 195, 202.
Corneille, 268.
Cotter's Saturday Night, The, 362, 363.
Couplet, the Augustan, origin of, 233.
Coventry Plays, 156.
Cowley, Abraham, 234–235, 265, 274.
Cowper, William, 309, 356–360.
Crabbe, George, 360.

Cranford, Mrs. Gaskell's, 450.
Cranmer, Thomas, 106.
Crashaw, Richard, 228.
Cressy, battle of, 54, 95.
Criticism, beginning of, 102, 126; Johnson's, 329; destructive criticism, 403, 432; Arnold's, 502, 503.
Cromwell's Letters and Speeches, 493.
Crown of Wild Olives, The, 499.
Culture and Anarchy, 504.
Curse of Kehama, The, 390.
Cursor Mundi, 42, 46.
Cymbeline, 199, 205.
Cynewulf, 21–23.

Daily Bread, Gibson's, 544.
Dance of the Seven Deadly Sins, The, 87.
Daniel, Cædmon's, 19.
Daniel, Samuel, 128, 131.
Daniel Deronda, 467.
Dante, 69, 404.
Darwin, Charles, 447.
Davenant, William, 234, 265.
David Balfour, 478.
David Copperfield, 451, 454.
Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, 336.
Defense of Guenevere, The, Morris's, 534.
Defense of Poetry, Shelley's, 429.
Defense of the English People, 248.
Defoe, Daniel, 298–301; as a journalist, 299; style, 300.
Dekker, Thomas, 208.
Deloney, Thomas, 139.
De Morgan, William Frend, 550.
Denham, John, 234, 304.
Deor's Lament, 7.
Departmental Ditties, 479.
De Quincey, Thomas, 409–412; quoted, 305.
De Regimine Principum, 85.
Deserted Village, The, 334.
Dethe of Blaunche the Duchesse, The, 68.
Dialogues upon Medals, Addison's, 291.
Diana of the Crossways, 473.
Diary, of Pepys, 262; of Evelyn, 268, 274.
Dickens, Charles, 300, 321, 451–457; early struggles, 451, 452; reform work, 454, 456; pathos, 455; humor, 456; personality, 456; compared with Thackeray, 463.
Dictes and Sayings of the Philosophers, 92.
Disraeli, Benjamin, 449, 450.
Dobson, Austin, 545; quoted, 297, 309.
Doctor Faustus, Marlowe's, 176.
Dodsley's *Old Plays*, 345.
Domesday Book, 28.
Don Juan, Byron's, 421, 422, 434.
Donne, John, 225–227, 251.
Don Quixote, 122, 318, 321.
Dorset, Earl of, 276.
Douglas, Gawain, 87.
Douglas, Home's, 352.
Drama, origin of, 154; early forms, 156–162; transitional forms, 162; influence of Latin drama, 164, 167; classical "unities," 164; first comedy, 165; first tragedy, 166; full development, 168; climax of its growth, 181; romantic development, 205; end of Elizabethan drama, 214; Restoration drama, 268; school of Congreve, 277; "sentimental school," 278; end of the old drama, 335; poetic drama, 420, 427, 519, 521; Irish drama, 548.
Dramatic monologue, 524.
Drapier's Letters, Swift's, 286.
Drayton, Michael, 116, 132.
Dream of Fair Women, A, 70.
Dream of John Ball, The, 536.
Dream of the Rood, The, 23.
Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, 478.
Druids, 1.
Drummond of Hawthornden, 208.
Dryden, John, 233, 266–276; heroic plays, 268; satires, 269–270; translations, 272; character, 272; essays, 274; on Swift's poetry, 288; influence on Pope, 302.

Duchess of Malfi, 213.
Dunbar, William, 87.
Dunciad, The, 306, 308.
Dyer, Edward, 131.
Dyer, John, 347.

Earle, John, 150.
Earthly Paradise, The, 534, 535.
Earthwork Out of Tuscany, 552.
Eastward Hol, Chapman and Jonson's, 213.
Ecclesiastical History of the English People, 17.
Edgeworth, Maria, 323.
Edinburgh Review founded, 403.
Edwin and Angelina, Goldsmith's, 334.
Egoist, The, Meredith's, 473.
Eikon Basilike, 248.
Eikonoklastes, Milton's, 248.
Elegy on Mrs. Anne Killigrew, 271.
Elegy Written in a Country Church Yard, 354.
Elene, Cynewulf's, 22.
Elizabeth, Queen, character of, 114; in *Faerie Queene*, 122; in Lyly's plays, 173.
Elliott, Ebenezer, 446.
Emerson, Ralph Waldo, quoted, 222, 381; and Carlyle, 490, 491.
Empedocles on Ætna, 509.
Endymion, Lyly's, 173; Keats's, 403, 432.
English Bards and Scotch Reviewers, 418.
English language, earliest form, 15; effect of the Conquest, 34, 51; French element, 40, 51; influence of Chaucer, 78; influence of the classics, 102, 136, 142, 222; influence of the Bible, 78, 105.
English race, its three homes, 4.
Epicœne, or the Silent Woman, 209.
Epipsychidion, Shelley's, 429.
Epithalamion, Spenser's, 125.
Erasmus, 100.
Essay Concerning Human Understanding, 264.
Essay on Criticism, Pope's, 304.
Essay on Dramatic Poesy, 274.
Essay on Man, 307.
Essays, beginning of, 103; Bacon's, 146; experimental forms, 150, 221, 223, 224; Dryden's 274; modern type formed, 290; Victorian essayists, 484–505.
Essays in Criticism, Arnold's, 502, 503.
Essays of Elia, 408.
Etherege, Sir George, 277.
Ethics of the Dust, 499.
Euphuism, 137, 223.
Evans, Mary Ann (George Eliot), 463–468; education, 464; religion, 464, 468; humor, 466; scientific fiction, 467; her teachings, 468.
Evelina, Burney's, 323.
Evelyn, John, 268, 274.
Eve of St. Agnes, The, 434.
Every Man in his Humor, 208.
Everyman, 160.
Exodus, Cædmon's, 19, 21.

Fableaux, 76.
Fables, Henryson's, 87; Dryden's, 272; Gay's, 310.
Faerie Queene, The, published, 118; plan and purpose of, 121; greatness of, 123; imitations of, 345, 348; allusions to, 49, 86, 111, 116.
Fair Penitent, Rowe's, 277.
Faithful Shepherdess, The, Fletcher's, 209, 211.
Falls of Princes, 84.
Far from the Madding Crowd, 475.
Farquhar, George, 277.
Fates of the Apostles, The, 22.
Feltham's *Resolves*, 150.
Female Quixote, Mrs. Lenox's, 314.
Fergusson, Robert, 363.
Fielding, Henry, 318–320, 323, 324.
Fight at Finnsburg, 14.
Fiona Macleod, 355. See Sharp, William.
Fitzgerald, Edward, 511.
Fletcher, Giles, 128, 225.

Fletcher, John, 209, 211.
Fletcher, Phineas, 225.
Ford, John, 214.
Fors Clavigera, Ruskin's, 498.
Four P's, The, 163.
Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, 140, 236.
Fra Lippo Lippi, 525.
Frankenstein, 392.
French Revolution, influence of, 371, 372, 416, 445, 500.
French Revolution, The, Carlyle's, 449, 492.
Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay, 174.
Froissart's *Chronicles*, 95.
Froude, James Anthony, quoted, 219, 240; and Carlyle, 490.
Fuller, Thomas, 223.

Galsworthy, John, 548.
Galt, John, 450.
Gammer Gurton's Needle, 165.
Garrick, David, 326, 327, 345.
Gascoigne, George, 128.
Gaskell, Elizabeth, 450.
Gawayne and the Grene Knight, 48.
Gay, John, 310.
Genesis, Cædmon's, 19.
Genesis and Exodus, 41.
Gentle Craft, Deloney's, 139.
Gentle Shepherd, Ramsay's, 346.
Geoffrey of Monmouth, 36–37.
George Eliot. See Evans, Mary Ann.
Gertrude of Wyoming, 438.
Gibbon, Edward, 336.
Gibson, Wilfred W., 544.
Gifford, William, 403.
Glastonbury, 3, 16, 93.
God and the Bible, 504.
Godwin, William, 324, 391, 426.
Goethe, estimate of Byron, 423; of Carlyle, 491.
Goldsmith, Oliver, 277, 278, 331–335; quoted, 322, 328, 329, 330, 339, 345.
Good-Natured Man, The, 334.
Good Thoughts in Bad Times, 223.
Googe, Barnabe, 105.
Gorboduc, 166.
Gosse, Edmund W., 545; quoted, 278.
Gothic, a term of contempt, 281; architecture, 345; romance, 391.
Gower, John, 80.
Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners, 236.
Gray, Thomas, 348, 352-355.
Greene, Robert, 138, 141, 172; plays, 174; on Shakespeare, 186.
Gregory, Lady Augusta, 548.
Greville, Fulke, 128.
Grocyn, William, 100.
Guardian, The, 297.
Gulliver's Travels, 283, 286–288.
Guthlac, 22.

Habington, William, 229.
Hackluyt's *Voyages*, 115.
Hall, Joseph, 150.
Hallam, Arthur Henry, 512, 516.
Hamlet, 12, 187, 195, 197, 268.
Handlyng Synne, 43.
Hardy, Thomas, 475–476.
Harvey, Gabriel, 115, 132, 141.
Hastings, Battle of, 32.
Hastings, Warren, impeachment of, 340.
Hawes, Stephen, 85.
Hazlitt, William, 305, 404.
Heart of Midlothian, 399.
Hebrew Melodies, Byron's, 420.
Hellenics, Landor's, 441.
Henry Esmond, 460, 467.
Henry IV, Shakespeare's, 201.
Henry V, Shakespeare's, 202.
Henry VI, Shakespeare's, 191, 201.
Henry VIII, Shakespeare's, 211.
Henryson, Robert, 87.
Herbert, George, 227.
Hero and Leander, Marlowe's, 179.
Heroes and Hero-Worship, 491, 495.
Heroic plays, Dryden's, 268.
Herrick, Robert, 231–233, 244.
Hesperides, Herrick's, 231, 232.
Hewlett, Maurice, 552.
Heywood, John, 162.
Heywood, Thomas, 212.

Hind and the Panther, The, 271.
History of Animated Nature, 332.
History of England, Macaulay's, 486.
History of English Poetry, Warton's, 349.
History of Frederick the Great, Carlyle's, 493.
History of the Kings of Britain, 36.
History of the Kings of England, 36.
Histriomastix, 219.
Hobbes, Thomas, 264.
Holinshed's *Chronicle*, 139, 187.
Holy and Profane State, The, 223.
Holy Grail, The, 48.
Holy Dying, 222.
Holy Living, 222.
Holy War, The, Bunyan's, 240.
Home, John, 352.
Homer, Chapman's translation, 140; Pope's, 306; Cowper's, 359; Morris's, 536.
Hood, Thomas, 439.
Hooker, Richard, 142.
Horace, 232, 236, 265, 272, 276, 304, 326, 515.
Hours of Idleness, Byron's, 417.
House of Fame, The, 70.
House of Life, The, 533.
House of the Wolfings, The, 536.
Hudibras, Butler's, 263.
Humanists, 99.
Humanitarian movement, 446, 470, 530.
Hume, David, 335.
Humphrey Clinker, 321.
Hunt, Holman, 531.
Hunt, Leigh, 493–404, 431, 433.
Huxley, Thomas, 447.
Hydriotaphia, Browne's, 221.
Hymn on the Nativity, 246, 251.
Hypatia, Kingsley's, 472.
Hyperion, Keats's, 435, 437.

Idea of a University, The, 501.
Idylls of the King, 516, 518.
Il Penseroso, 247, 251.
Imaginary Conversations, Landor's, 441.
Inchbald, Elizabeth, 324.
Indian Emperor, The, 269.
In Memoriam, Tennyson's, 514, 516.
Interludes, 162.
Irish Melodies, Moore's, 438.
Italy, Rogers's, 438; influence on Ruskin, 495.
It Never Can Happen Again, 550.

James I, character of, 217, 219.
James I, of Scotland, 86.
Jane Eyre, 468.
Jeffrey, Francis, 403, 455, 487.
Jew of Malta, The, Marlowe's, 177.
Johnson, Samuel, 324–331; on Goldsmith, 333; on romanticism, 348; 354; quoted, 226, 271, 274, 306, 317, 330.
Jonathan Wild, 319.
Jonson, Ben, 131, 151, 187, 207–211, 219, 227, 234; his comedies, 209; his classical bias, 210, 233; his masques, 210.
Joseph Andrews, 318.
Joseph Vance, 550.
Journal of the Plague Year, 301.
Journal to Stella, 286.
Journalism, beginning of, 299.
Judith, 21.
Juliana, Cynewulf's, 22.
Julius Cæsar, 195, 202.
Jusserand, J. J., quoted, 29, 58.

Keats, John, 430–437; misfortunes, 433; character, 434; love of nature, 436; his philosophy, 437; on Pope, 432; allusions to, 140, 327, 383, 403, 531.
Keble, John, 501.
Kelmskott Press, 536.
Kim, Kipling's, 480.
King John, Shakespeare's, 183, 191.
King Lear, 195, 198, 203, 206.
Kingsley, Charles, 472, 501.
King's Quair, The, 87.
Kipling, Rudyard, 479–481.
Knight of the Burning Pestle, The, 211.

Knightes Tale, The, 72, 76.
Kyd, Thomas, 167.

La Belle Dame sans Merci, 436.
Lady of the Lake, 396.
Lalla Rookh, 438.
L'Allegro, 247, 251.
Lamb, Charles, 405–409, 439; quoted, 212, 222, 301, 404.
Lamb, Mary, 406.
Land of Heart's Desire, The, 547.
Landor, Walter Savage, 440–442.
Lang, Andrew, 545.
Langland, William, 55–59.
Last Days of Pompeii, 450.
Last Fight of the Revenge, 139.
Last of the Barons, 450.
Latimer, Hugh, 106.
Latter-day Pamphlets, 493.
Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity, 142.
Lay of the Last Minstrel, 396.
[illegible]non, 37–39, 55.
La[illegible] of Ancient Rome, 485.
Legende of Good Women, The, 67, 70.
Letters of Phalaris, 284.
Leviathan, Hobbes's, 264.
Liberty of Prophesying, 222.
Life and Death of Jason, The, 534.
Life and Death of Mr. Badman, The, 241.
Life and Death of Richard-Yea-and-Nay, The, 552.
Life of Johnson, Boswell's, 330.
Light that Failed, The, 480.
Lily, William, 101.
Linacre, Thomas, 100.
Lindsay, Sir David, 88.
Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey, 372, 380.
Literature and Dogma, 504.
Little Dorrit, 454.
Little Minister, The, 549.
Lives of the Poets, Johnson's, 329, 360.
Locke, John, 264.
Locke, William John, 551.
Locker-Lampson, Frederic, 439.
Lockhart, John Gibson, 401, 403.
Lodge, Thomas, 128, 131, 138, 172, 174.
Looking-Glass for London and England, A, 174.
Lord Jim, Conrad's, 551.
Lorna Doone, 483.
Lothair, Disraeli's, 451.
Love Letter, The, 14.
Love-Rune, A, 43.
Lovelace, Richard, 230.
Love's Labor's Lost, 138, 190.
Lowell, James Russell, quoted, 64, 78, 213, 255, 273, 354, 436, 441.
Ludus de S. Katharina, 158.
Lycidas, 247, 252, 330.
Lydgate, John, 84.
Lyly, John, 137, 141, 172.
Lyrical Ballads, 372, 376, 386.
Lyrics, earliest English, 12, 14, 50, 51; Elizabethan, 129, 178; influence of Donne, 226–228; Cavalier lyrics, 229–233, 276; Burns's, 366; Shelley's, 428; Tennyson's, 515; Browning's dramatic lyrics, 525.

Mabinogion, 2.
Macaulay, Thomas Babington, 484–489; his wonderful memory, 485; the *Essays*, 486; his style, 487; quoted, 146, 240, 277, 292, 423.
Macbeth, 195, 196, 212.
MacFlecknoe, Dryden's, 270, 306.
Mackenzie, Henry, 323.
Macpherson, James, 355.
Malory, Sir Thomas, 92.
Man of Feeling, The, Mackenzie's, 323.
Man of Mode, The, Etherege's, 277.
Man of Property, The, Galsworthy's, 549.
Mandeville, John, 61–63.
Manfred, Byron's, and *Faust*, 421, 423.
Mannyng of Brunne, Robert, 43.
Marius the Epicurean, 500.
Marlowe, Christopher, 131, 167, 172; plays, 175–178, 186, 191, 204.
Marmion, 396.
Marprelate Controversy, 141.

Marston, John, 208, 213.
Martin Chuzzlewit, 454.
Marvell, Andrew, 236.
Masefield, John, 544.
Masques, 210, 219, 252.
Massinger, Philip, 214.
Master of Ballantræ, The, 478.
Maud, Tennyson's, 517.
Medal, The, Dryden's, 270.
Mediævalism, revival of, 345, 531, 534.
Meditative School of poetry, 509.
Melancholy, Teutonic, 12.
Menaphon, Greene's, 138.
Merchant of Venice, 177, 191.
Meredith, George, 472–475.
Merry Wives of Windsor, The, 185.
Metaphysical poets, 226, 235.
Microcosmography, Earle's, 150.
Middlemarch, 463, 467.
Middleton, Thomas, 212.
Midsummer Night's Dream, 194, 268.
Mill, John Stuart, 447.
Mill on the Floss, The, 464, 466.
Millais, John Everett, 531.
Milnes, Richard Monckton, Lord Houghton, 449, 511.
Milton, John, 244–259; education, 246; college poems, 246; at Horton, 247; Italian journey, 247; marriage, 248; prose period, 248, 250; made Latin Secretary, 248; last years, 250; lyric period, 251; prose style, 253; sonnets, 254; *Paradise Lost*, 255–259; *Samson Agonistes*, 259; allusions to, 69, 151, 174, 209, 211, 222, 225, 226, 235, 236, 272, 296, 330, 382, 420, 497, 532.
Milton and Cædmon, 19, 35.
Minstrel, The, Beattie's, 349.
Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border, 396.
Miracle and Mystery plays, 156, 173, 174.
Mirror for Magistrates, 110.
Misfortunes of Arthur, The, 167.
Mitford, Mary Russell, 450.
Modern Painters, Ruskin's, 496, 497.
Molière, 213, 268, 277.
Moore, Thomas, 438.
Morality plays, 160.
Morall Fabillis, Henryson's, 87.
More, Sir Thomas, 101.
Morris, William, 531, 534–537; his mediævalism, 534; his idealism, 536.
Morte d'Arthur, 47; Malory's, 92–95, 518, 534.
Mother Hubberd's Tale, 125.
Mountain Lovers, Sharp's, 547.
Much Ado About Nothing, 194.
Mulgrave, Earl of, 266.
Mysteries of Udolpho, 391, 392.

Naseby, Battle of, 218.
Nashe, Thomas, 141.
Natural History of Selborne, White's, 354.
Nature poetry, earliest in English, 11, 67, 87; Shakespeare's, 183, 184; Herrick's, 232; Thomson's, 347; Cowper's, 359; Burns's, 362, 366; Wordsworth's, 379; Shelley's, 428; Keats's, 436; Tennyson's, 520.
New Atlantis, The, Bacon's, 149.
New Way to Pay Old Debts, A, 214.
Newcombs, The, 460.
Newman, John Henry, 500–502.
Nibelungenlied, 14.
Nicholas Nickleby, 454.
Night Thoughts, Young's, 349, 464.
Noctes Ambrosianæ, 403.
Normans, in France, 32; characteristics of, 33.
Northanger Abbey, 392.
North's *Plutarch's Lives*, 140, 187.
Novel, the Elizabethan, 137–139; picaresque, 139; origin of the modern, 314, 315; Victorian, 449; sentimental, 318, 322, 323; romantic, 314, 345, 391, 392, 470, 478; historical romance, 398; realistic, 139, 320, 393, 459, 466, 470, 475; psychological novel, 467, 475.
Novum Organon, Bacon's, 148.
Noyes, Alfred, 544–545.

Nut-Browne Mayd, The, 90, 309.
Nymphidia, Drayton's, 132.

Occleve, Thomas, 85.
Ode for St. Cecilia's Day, Dryden's, 271.
Ode on a Grecian Urn, 435, 437.
Ode on the Intimations of Immortality, 381.
Ode on the Passions, Collins's, 352.
Ode on the Popular Superstitions of the Highlands, 352.
Ode to a Nightingale, Keats's, 435.
Ode to Evening, Collins's, 352.
Ode to the West Wind, 428.
Old Curiosity Shop, 454.
Old Mortality, 399.
Old Wives' Tale, Peele's, 173, 252.
Old Wives' Tale, The, Bennett's, 550.
Oliver Twist, 454.
Olney Hymns, 358.
On a Distant Prospect of Eton College, 354.
On His Blindness, Milton's sonnet, 254.
Opera, first English, 267, 310.
Ordeal of Richard Feveril, The, 473.
Origin of Species, 447.
Orlando Furioso, Greene's, 174.
Ormulum, 40.
Orphan, The, Otway's, 277.
Ossian, poems of, 355.
Othello, 195, 196.
Otway, Thomas, 277.
Overbury, Sir Thomas, 150.
Owl and Nightingale, The, 51.
Oxford Movement, 501, 531.

Painter's *Palace of Pleasure*, 187.
Palgrave, Francis Turner, 511.
Palice of Honour, Douglas's, 87.
Pamela, Richardson's, 315, 316, 318.
Pamphleteering, 141, 219.
Pandosto, Greene's, 138.
Paola and Francesca, Phillips's, 543.
Paracelsus, Browning's, 522.
Paradise Lost, 250, 255–259.
Paradise Regained, 250, 259.
Paraphrase, Cædmon's, 19.
Parlement of Foules, 70.
Parnell, Thomas, 308.
Past and Present, Carlyle's, 493.
Pastoral poetry, earliest, 87; Spenser's, 119; in the drama, 209, 211; Browne's, 225; Milton's, 252; Pope's, 304; Gay's, 310; Ramsay's, 346; Tennyson's, 513.
Pastyme of Pleasure, Hawes's, 85.
Pater, Walter, 499–500; on Lamb, 408.
Patience, 49.
Pearl, The, 44, 49.
Peele, George, 173.
Pendennis, 459.
Penshurst, Jonson's, 234.
Pepys, Samuel, 262, 268.
Percy, Thomas, 350.
Peregrine Pickle, 321
Pericles and Aspasia, 442.
Perkin Warbeck, Ford's, 214.
Petrarch, 66, 69, 96, 99, 109, 127, 128, 254, 533.
Philaster, 211.
Philips, Ambrose, 309.
Phillips, Stephen, 543.
Phillpotts, Eden, 550.
Phœnix, The, 23.
Picaresque novel, 314.
Pickwick Papers, 449, 452.
Piers Plowman, Vision of, 55.
Pilgrim's Progress, 220, 238, 239–240.
Pindarique Odes, Cowley's, 235, 288.
Pippa Passes, 522, 525, 527.
Piscatory Eclogues, 225.
Play of the Weather, The, 163.
Playboy of the Western World, The, Synge's, 548.
Pleasures of Hope, Campbell's, 438.
Pleasures of Memory, Rogers's, 438.
Poems and Ballads, Swinburne's, 538.
Poems of Two Brothers, 512.
Poetaster, The, Jonson's, 208.
Polychronicon, Higden's, 55, 92.
Polyolbion, Drayton's, 116, 132.

Pope, Alexander, 280, 282, 297; life and character, 301–304; as a satirist, 306; influence on poetry, 308; allusions to, 70, 234, 357.
Porter, Jane, 392.
Praed, Winthrop Mackworth, 439.
Præterita, Ruskin's, 499.
Praise of Folly, Erasmus's, 100.
Prayer Book, The, 106.
Predictions by Isaac Bickerstaff, 285.
Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, 531.
Pre-Raphaelitism, Ruskin's, 531.
Pricke of Conscience, The, 43.
Pride and Prejudice, 393.
Princess, The, 513, 516, 520.
Printing-press, first English, 91.
Prior, Matthew, 309.
Prisoner of Chillon, The, 421.
Procter, Bryan Waller, 439.
Progress of Poesy, The, 354.
Prologue, Chaucer's, 73.
Prometheus Unbound, Mrs. Browning's translation, 529.
Prometheus Unbound, Shelley's, 427.
Prose, beginning of, 25; first poetic prose, 27; in *The Ancren Riwle*, 42; in the Prayer Book, 106; Latinized prose, 136, 142, 222; Euphuistic prose, 137; its use in comedy, 173; improved by Cowley, 235; Milton's prose, 253; Dryden's influence, 273, 274; Swift's, 288; Dr. Johnson's prose, 329; Burke's, 341; artistic prose, 402; De Quincey's "impassioned prose," 411; Landor's, 442; Thackeray's, 462; Stevenson's, 478; Macaulay's, 487; Carlyle's, 494; Ruskin's poetic prose, 496; Pater's, 500; Arnold's, 504; Morris's antique prose, 536.
Prothalamion, Spenser's, 125.
Prynne, William, 219.
Puritans, 217, 236, 237, 244, 262, 263, 264.
Purple Island, The, 225.
Puttenham's *Art of English Poesie*, 108.
Quarterly Review founded, 403.
Queen Mother and Rosamond, The, Swinburne's, 537.

Rabbi Ben Ezra, Browning's, 528.
Radcliffe, Mrs. Ann, 324, 391.
Raleigh, Sir Walter, 115, 118, 139.
Ralph Royster Doyster, 165.
Rambler, The, 328.
Ramsay, Allan, 346.
Rape of the Lock, 305.
Rasselas, Johnson's, 323, 328.
Reade, Charles, 470.
Realism, Chaucer's, 77; Ben Jonson's, 209; Bunyan's, 241; in fiction, 393; Thackeray's, 459; Meredith's, 475; Hardy's, 476; Pre-Raphaelite, 531.
Reflections on the Revolution in France, Burke's, 340.
Reformation, 100, 104, 141.
Religio Laici, Dryden's, 271.
Religio Medici, 151, 221.
Reliques of Ancient English Poetry, Percy's, 350.
Renaissance, 80, 83; meaning of the term, 98; in Italy, 99; in England, 100, 113, 122, 127, 140, 191, 265; Celtic, 546.
Restoration, moral and social effects of, 262.
Revolt of Islam, Shelley's, 427.
Reynolds, Sir Joshua, 327, 331, 333.
Richard II, Shakespeare's, 201.
Richard III, Shakespeare's, 191, 201.
Richardson, Samuel, 296, 315–318, 320, 323, 324.
Riddles of Cynewulf, 23.
Riders to the Sea, 548.
Ring and the Book, The, 523, 526.
Rivals, The, Sheridan's, 335.
Robene and Makyne, 87.
Robert of Gloucester, 34.
Robertson, William, 336.
Robin Hood ballads, 89, 90.
Robinson Crusoe, 299, 300.
Rochester, Earl of, 276.
Roderick Random, 320.

Rogers, Samuel, 438.
Rolle de Hampole, Richard, 43.
Romances, Mediæval, 45; cycles of, 46; characteristics of, 47; Elizabethan, 138; French, 268, 314; "Gothic," 345, 391, 470; historical, 398.
Romans in England, 3.
Romanticism, 169, 178, 205, 207; revival of, 296, 309, 313, 344–370, 531, 534; Beers's definition of, 346; triumph of, 372; Coleridge's, 388.
Romaunt of the Rose, 68.
Romeo and Juliet, 191.
Romola, 465, 467.
Rosalynde, Lodge's, 138, 194.
Rosamond Gray, Lamb's, 407.
Roscommon, Earl of, 265.
Rossetti, Christina, 532.
Rossetti, Dante Gabriel, 254, 351, 531, 532–534; realism, 532; romanticism, 533; sonnets, 533.
Rossetti, William Michael, 532.
Round Table, The, 47, 93, 518.
Rowe, Nicholas, 277.
Rowley Poems, Chatterton's, 356.
Royal Society, 149, 264, 265, 274.
Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam, 511.
Ruin, The, 13.
Ruskin, John, 495–499; love of nature, 495, 496; teachings, 497, 531; philanthropy, 498.
Russell, George W. "A.E.", 545.

Sackville, Thomas, 110, 166.
Sad Shepherd, The, Jonson's, 209.
Samson Agonistes, 250, 259.
Satire, 57, 79, 87, 88, 96, 100, 120, 213, 236, 263, 276; Jonson's, 209; Dryden's, 270; Swift's, 283–288, 296, 307; Addison's, 296; Johnson's, 326; Thackeray's, 459, 461; Meredith's, 475.
Satirio-mastix, Dekker's, 208.
Sartor Resartus, 490, 491.
Saxons, 4, 5; love of song, 6.
Scenes from Clerical Life, 465.
Scholar Gipsy, The, 510.
Scholastic philosophy, 98.
Scholemaster, The, Ascham's, 103.
School for Scandal, The, 335.
School of Abuse, The, 126.
Schoolmistress, The, Shenstone's, 348.
Science, growth of, 148, 264; physical, 447; conflict with religion, 448; effect on literature, 448, 467, 475.
Scop, his character, 6, 7, 12.
Scott, Walter, 394–402; poetry, 396; limitations of his genius, 398; patriotism, 399; character, 401; on Burns, 364; allusions to, 45, 324, 334, 351, 372, 389, 495.
Scottish poetry, early, 86.
Scourge of Villainy, The, 213.
Scudéry, Mlle. de, 268.
Seafarer, The, 13.
Seasons, The, Thomson's, 347, 348.
Sedley, Sir Charles, 276.
Sejanus, Jonson's, 210.
Seneca, his influence on English drama, 166, 167.
Sense and Sensibility, 393.
Sentimental Journey, Sterne's, 321.
"Sentimental School" of drama, 278.
Sentimentalism, 318, 322, 323, 335, 391.
Sesame and Lilies, 498.
Seven Lamps of Architecture, 497.
Seven Seas, The, 481.
Severn, Joseph, 433.
Shadwell, Thomas, 270, 271.
Shakespeare, William, his teachers in the drama, 172; compared with Marlowe, 175, 177, 178; life and works, 181–206; education, 183, 186, 187; marriage, 185; deer-stealing story, 185; first dramatic work, 186; as an actor, 187; character, 188; classification of plays, 189; sonnets, 128, 192; the great comedies, 194; the great tragedies, 195–199; historical plays, 201; Roman plays, 202; his style, 203; his blank verse, 204; his genius, 206; associates and

successors, 207; revival of, 345;
Shakespeare-Bacon question, 147;
allusions to, 89, 114, 140, 159, 175, 177, 208, 210, 211, 212, 244, 252, 268, 295, 308.
Shakespeare Jubilee, 345.
Sharp, William (Fiona Macleod), 547.
Shaw, George Bernard, 549.
She Stoops to Conquer, 334.
Shelley, Percy Bysshe, 424–430; compared with Byron, 416, 419; passion for reform, 425, 427; youthful spirit, 427; idealism, 429; character, 429; youthful novels, 391; allusions to, 372, 382, 437, 515, 516, 521, 538.
Shenstone, William, 344, 348.
Shepherd's Calendar, The, 117, 119.
Shepherd's Pipe, Browne's, 225.
Sheridan, Richard Brinsley, 277, 278, 335.
Shirley, James, 210, 214.
Shoemaker's Holiday, Dekker's, 212.
Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage, 278.
Shortest Way with Dissenters, The, 299.
Sidney, Sir Philip, 117, 125–128, 130, 164.
Siege of Rhodes, Davenant's, 267.
Sigurd the Volsung, Morris's, 536.
Silas Marner, 466.
Sir Charles Grandison, 317, 323.
Skelton, John, 95, 162.
Smollett, Tobias, 320–321, 323, 324.
Sohrab and Rustum, 510.
Song of Roland, The, 45, 47.
Songs of Innocence, Blake's, 361.
Sonnet, definition of, 128; Elizabethan sonneteers, 128; revival of, 345.
Sonnets from the Portuguese, 530.
Sordello, Browning's, 522.
Southey, Robert, 385, 390.
Spanish Gipsy, The, 465.
Spanish Tragedy, The, 167, 175.
Specimens of English Dramatic Poets, 408.
Spectator, The, 295–297.
Speculum Meditantis, 81.
Spencer, Herbert, 447.
Spence's *Anecdotes*, 302.
Spenser, Edmund, 116–125; at Penshurst, 117; in Ireland, 118, 119; ruin and death, 119; influence, 225; revival of, 345, 349.
Spirit of the Age, The, Hazlitt's, 405.
Stedman, Edmund Clarence, quoted, 509, 516, 527.
Steele, Richard, 275, 278, 282, 309; life and works, 292–298.
Sterne, Laurence, 321–323.
Stevenson, Robert Louis, 301, 394, 476–479; on Dickens, 456.
Stones of Venice, 497, 535.
Storie of Thebes, 84.
Stow's *Survey of London*, 139.
Strawberry Hill, 345.
Studies in the History of the Renaissance, 499.
Sublime and Beautiful, Burke's, 337.
Suckling, Sir John, 230, 244.
Surrey, Earl of, 108, 127.
Swift, Jonathan, 282–289; work for Ireland, 286; style, 288; character, 289; allusions to, 141, 307.
Swinburne, Algernon Charles, 531, 537–539; lyrical gift, 538; faults of excess, 539.
Sylva, Evelyn's, 274.
Synge, John Millington, 548.
Synthetic Philosophy, Spencer's, 447.

Tale of a Tub, The, 283, 284.
Tale of Two Cities, A, 452, 455.
Tales from Shakespeare, Lamb's, 408.
Tales of the Mermaid Tavern, 545.
Talisman, The, 400.
Tamburlaine the Great, Marlowe's, 167.
Task, The, Cowper's, 358.
Tasso's *Orlando Furioso*, 120.
Tatler, The, 293, 294.
Taylor, Jeremy, 222, 248.
Taylor, Sir Henry, 449.
Temple, Sir William, 274, 283.
Temple of Peace, Shirley's, 210.
Temple, The, Herbert's, 227.

Tempest, The, 199, 200.
Tennyson, Alfred, 511–520; personal qualities, 512; lyrical quality, 515; religion, 516; dramatic ambition, 519; his art, 519; personality, 520; compared with Browning, 521; quoted, 44, 399, 509, 527; allusions to, 24, 70, 93, 139, 235, 448.
Tenure of Kings and Magistrates, 248.
Tess of the D'Urbervilles, 475.
Testament of Cresseid, The, 87.
Teutons, their conquest of Britain, 4; characteristics of, 5, 6, 11, 12; converted to Christianity, 16.
Thackeray, William Makepeace, 457–463; character, 458; genius, 461; style, 462; compared with Dickens, 463; quoted, 310, 487.
Thalaba, Southey's, 390.
Theaters, Elizabethan, 169–172; closed by Parliament, 214; reopened, 267.
Theobald, Lewis, 307.
Theocritus, 120, 304, 510.
Theophrastic essays, 150.
Thomas de Hales, 43.
Thomson, James, 347, 357.
Thyrsis, Arnold's, 510.
Tickell, Thomas, 309.
Timber, Jonson's, 151.
Time Machine, The, Wells's, 552.
Titus Andronicus, 175, 191.
To a Skylark, Shelley's, 428.
Tom Jones, 319.
Tottel's Miscellany, 110.
Townsley Plays, 156.
Toxophilus, Ascham's, 103.
Tracts for the Times, Newman's, 501.
Traherne, Thomas, 229.
Translations of classics, 87, 109, 140; of Virgil, 272, 536; of Chaucer, 79, 272; of Homer, 140, 306, 359, 536; of Dante, 404, 532.
Traveler, The, Goldsmith's, 332, 334.
Travels of Mandeville, 61, 95.
Travels with a Donkey, 479.
Treasure Island, 301, 478.
Tristan and Iseult, 48.
Tristram Shandy, 321, 322.
Troilus and Criseyde, 69.
Trollope, Anthony, 471.
Troubadours and Trouvères, 46.
Troye Book, The, 84.
Trueborn Englishman, The, 299.
Turner, J. M. W., 496.
Twelfth Night, or What You Will, 194, 195, 205.
Twickenham, 302.
Two Noble Kinsmen, The, 211.
Tyndale, William, 105.
Tyndall, John, 447.
Typhoon, Conrad's, 551.

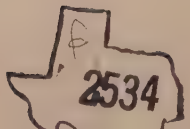
Udall, Nicholas, 165.
Unities, the three classic, 164, 268.
Urn Burial, Browne's, 221.
Utopia, More's, 101.

Vanbrugh, John, 277.
Vanity Fair, 459.
Vanity of Human Wishes, The, 326.
Vatheck, Beckford's, 391.
Vaughan, Henry, 228.
Venice Preserved, 277.
Venus and Adonis, Shakespeare's, 179.
Vers de Société, 309; defined, 439.
Versification, Anglo-Saxon, 15; transitional forms, 39, 40; French influence, 48; Chaucer's invention of the couplet, 78; ballad measure, 89; Skeltonical verse, 96; blank verse, 109, 166, 178, 204, 258, 345; sonnet, 109, 128, 254, 345, 382, 384; Spenserian stanza, 124; the classic couplet, 233, 265; Pindaric ode, 235; Hudibrastic verse, 263; Dryden's couplet, 270; Pope's, 308; classic ode, 354; Coleridge's new meter, 389.
Vicar of Wakefield, 323, 334.
Vice, the, in old plays, 161.
Victorian poetry, its characteristics, 508.
View of the Present State of Ireland, 118.
Village, The, Crabbe's, 360.

Virgil's *Æneid*, first English translation of, 87; Surrey's, 109; Dryden's, 272.
Virgin Martyr, The, 214.
Virginibus Puerisque, 479.
Volpone, or the Fox, Jonson's, 209.
Voltaire, quoted, 292.
Vox Clamantis, 81.
Vulgar Errors, Browne's, 221.

Wace's *Brut*, 37.
Waldhere, 14.
Waller, Edmund, 233, 265.
Walpole, Horace, 345, 352, 391.
Walton, Isaac, 142, 150, 224–225, 227.
Wanderer, The, 12.
Ward, Mrs. Humphry, 551.
Warner, William, 131.
Warton, Joseph, 349.
Warton, Thomas, 349.
Watts-Dunton, Theodore, 531.
Waverley Novels, 398.
Way of the World, The, 278.
Webster, John, 213.
Weir of Hermiston, 478.
Weird, the Teutonic Fate, 12.
Wells, Herbert George, 552.
Wesley, Charles, 350.
Westward Ho!, Kingsley's, 472.
Whigs and Tories, 264, 282, 292.
White, Gilbert, 354.
White Devil, The, 213.
Why come ye nat to Courte, 96.
Widsith, 6, 7.
Wife's Lament, The, 14.
Wilhelm Meister, 491.
William of Malmesbury, 35.
Wilson, John, 403.
Wilson, Thomas, his *Art of Rhetorique*, 102.
Winchilsea, Lady, 309.
Windsor Forest, Pope's, 234.
Winter's Tale, The, 183, 199.
Witch of Atlas, The, 429.
Wither, George, 229.
Woman Killed with Kindness, A, 212.
Wordsworth, Dorothy, 376.
Wordsworth, William, 374-384; in France, 376; poetic reforms, 377, 378; revives the sonnet, 381; influence, 383; quoted, 244, 351, 402, 432; allusions to, 254, 357, 371, 372, 426, 436.
Worthies of England, 223.
Wuthering Heights, 470.
Wyatt, Sir Thomas, 108, 109, 127.
Wycherley, William, 277.
Wyclif, John, 55, 96; life and work, 59–61.

Yeats, William Butler, 547.
Yellowplush Papers, The, 449.
Young, Edward, 349.


2534